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A Cabin Courtship

by

Irene Jean Crandall

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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

154 West Randolph Street

CHICAGO

A CABIN COURTSHIP

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

IRENE JEAN GRANDALL

AUTHOR OF

"Tea and Politics," "Beyond the Gate," "Hands All Round,"
"For Freedom," "The Last Rehearsal," "The Fairy Woods," Etc



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

PS3505
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TO 1921

MY FATHER

STRONG, TRUE-HEARTED AND
FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS



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MAR -7 1921

CLD 56988

A CABIN COURTSHIP

FOR FIVE MEN AND FOUR WOMEN

CHARACTERS

(As you meet them.)

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| JUNE FORREST..... | <i>The Singer</i> |
| PHILIP RUSSELL..... | <i>The Painter</i> |
| MRS. CULPEPPER..... | <i>June's Aunt</i> |
| GEORGE WARE..... | <i>Carol's Fiancé</i> |
| CAROL PRATT..... | <i>The Poet's Inspiration</i> |
| MURRAY ALDEN..... | <i>The Poet</i> |
| BILL JAKIN..... | <i>A Mountaineer</i> |
| LIZZIE JAKIN..... | <i>Bill's Wife</i> |
| BIG PETE..... | <i>Bill's Enemy</i> |

TIME — *The Present.*

PLACE — *The Mountains of Tennessee.*

SCENE — *The Living-room of a Mountain Cabin.*

ACT I. An afternoon in May.

ACT II. Two weeks later.

ACT III. The same evening.

CHARACTERISTICS AND COSTUMES.

GEORGE WARE: A successful business man who was once a poor boy of the mountains. Aged 30. He is tall, lean and muscular, with a well-built frame. He gives the impression of strength by his quiet, but forceful manner. He speaks in a slow, deliberate way with a slight suggestion of the mountaineer's drawl. Masculine, dominant and primitive. A doer and not a talker.

Costumes: Act I. Business suit.

Act II. A rain-coat over a business suit.

Act III. Corduroy trousers and an outing shirt.

CAROL PRATT: A young girl of 23. She is sweet, slender and with a flower-like beauty and wistful charm. She is romantic and thinks life is made up of poetry and love-making.

Costumes: Act I. Travelling suit and large hat.

Act II. A dainty summer frock over which she wears a sweater coat.

Act III. A long travelling coat over a pretty light dress. Travelling hat.

MURRAY ALDEN: Aged 28. A minor poet and lecturer on aesthetics. Effeminate with dreamy eyes. He is impractical and self-centered, accustomed to the admiration of women. A talker and not a doer.

Costumes: Act I. Ordinary day-time clothes with a conspicuous tie and a suggestion of the dandy.

Act II and Act III. White outing suit.

JUNE FORREST: A light-hearted, healthy girl of 20. Frank and outspoken, with lots of common sense. She can sing and dance, but she can't cook.

Costumes: Act I. A stylish travelling suit and hat.

Act II. A light dress and a big gingham apron.

Act III. A pretty, fluffy dress with a low neck. A scarf of tulle over her head and shoulders.

PHILIP RUSSELL: Aged 25. A poor artist who cannot sell his pictures. Good-hearted, happy-go-lucky and irresponsible. He plays the guitar and sings.

Costumes: Act I. Travelling suit.

Act II. and Act III. Outing suit.

MRS. CULPEPPER: A middle-aged club woman, absorbed in New Thought, aesthetics and Hindu philosophy. She is verging on stoutness and trying to diet to reduce her weight. Very serious and dignified.

Costumes: Act I. Smart travelling suit and hat. Later — a negligée.

Act II. A stylish afternoon dress and a shawl.

Act III. The same as Act II without the shawl.

BILL JAKIN: A tall, lank mountaineer, with dark hair and beard. Aged 35. He has a grave and deliberate bearing and proud independence. Brawny, sinewy fellow of great endurance. He speaks with a drawl.

Costume: Brown jeans, a dark blue shirt and a huge, black floppy hat. Patched and ragged, but not untidy.

LIZ JAKIN: A tall, thin mountain woman, with light hair, combed straight and plain. She is about 30, but looks older. Although faded, she still carries herself well and has unmistakable dignity.

Costume: A cheap blue calico dress and a pink sunbonnet. Coarse shoes.

BIG PETE. A huge, skulking man, with a dark, crafty face and shifting eyes.

Costume: A cheap, coarse suit with trousers tucked into cowhide boots. A slouched hat. He carries a pistol.

LIST OF PROPERTIES.

ACT I.

Tables, chairs, fireplace and rifle.

Suit-cases, travelling-bags, sketching-materials and razor for PHIL.

Guitar and bundles for JUNE.

Books for MRS. CULPEPPER.

Packages and big stick for GEORGE.

Mountain laurel and other flowers for CAROL.

Old pitcher, tin pail.

ACT II.

Wood for fireplace, matches, candles.

Writing-pad and pencil for MURRAY.

Books, easel, sketching-materials.

Kerosene lamp, greasy cloth, letter and money for
CAROL.

Dishes and tray.

Pan of biscuits, cook-book, table-cloth and card-board
sign for JUNE.

Laurel, other flowers and plants.

Step-ladder and hammer.

Large market basket and vegetables for LIZ.

Packages, letters, magazine, matches for GEORGE.

Rifle for BILL.

ACT III.

Jar of laurel.

Clock that strikes the hour.

Guitar for PHILIP.

Suit-case for CAROL.

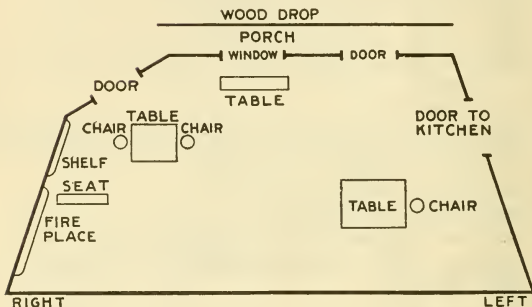
Tin pail for LIZ.

Rifle for BILL and pistol for BIG PETE.

Tulle scarf and wrap for JUNE.

Poem on paper for MURRAY.

SCENE PLOT



ACTS I, II AND III.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance, up stage; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

A CABIN COURTSHIP

THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE: *The living-room of a mountain cabin built of logs. An open window, at the back center, looks out on to a porch and gives a glimpse of the woods beyond. A door left of center in flat leads outdoors. A door up L. leads into the kitchen and another door up R., diagonal, leads into MRS. CULPEPPER'S room. There is a large fireplace with built-in seat down R. Over the fireplace a rifle rests on a pair of buck-antlers. A dropleaf table stands in front of the window. Rude shelves, built in the rough walls, hold dishes, candlesticks, etc. There are several home-made rustic chairs and a large table at R., also a smaller table up left. The room looks as if it had not been occupied for some time.*

At rise of curtain the stage is empty. The window looking on to the porch is open. There is the sound of carriage wheels and a man's drawling voice calling "Whoa — whoa." Then a young, girlish voice says gaily, "Here's the place. Let's jump out." In strong masculine tones comes the answer — "Wait a minute, JUNE. I'll help you." There is the sound of feet on the porch and then the outside door is opened and JUNE comes in, with her arms full of bundles. She is

a healthy looking girl of twenty, who walks with a light springing step and an independent carriage of her head. She wears a stylish travelling suit and hat. When she has put down the guitar and other bundles, she looks around the cabin with curiosity. PHILIP comes in, carrying two suit cases, a travelling bag and some sketching materials. He is twenty-five, medium height, good-looking and jolly.

PHILIP (*dropping the baggage on the floor*). I wish they had porters here in the mountains. That old native who drove us out (*imitating drawl*) 'lowed as we-uns cud do our own toting. Blamed independent — these mountaineers.

JUNE (*who has been inspecting the place*). Oh, Phil, isn't Mr. Ware's cabin adorable? I've never seen anything like it.

PHILIP. He said if we wanted the simple life, we'd find it here.

JUNE. Yes, that day at your studio, when we were all longing to fly from the noise and hustle of the city to some quiet spot. It was good of Mr. Ware to invite us to spend two or three weeks at his place here in the mountains, wasn't it?

PHILIP. Mighty good. This will be a new kind of house-party.

JUNE (*with girlish enthusiasm*). Think of the good times we'll have!

PHILIP. Bully.

JUNE. And of all the things that can happen here in two weeks. (*She gives PHILIP an alluring look, but he fails to understand the significance of her glance.*)

PHILIP. I bet we have a shooting scrap.

JUNE (*in wide-eyed astonishment*). Shooting scrap?

PHILIP. Yes, these Tennessee mountaineers are always shooting each other up.

JUNE. Oh, I wasn't thinking of what would happen to the *mountaineers*.

PHILIP (*going up to her*). What were you thinking of, June?

JUNE (*trying to hide her embarrassment*). Well — well — I was thinking what fun it will be to get along without any servants.

PHILIP. I'm so glad that you're a good cook.

JUNE (*somewhat dismayed, stops smiling*). Oh, yes. You like my fudge, don't you?

PHILIP. You bet, and the girl for me is the girl who can cook.

JUNE (*with a sudden start*). Phil — we've forgotten Aunt Sophronia.

PHILIP (*with a queer smile*). How could anybody forget your Aunt Sophronia?

JUNE (*going to the window and looking out*). She's sitting out there with that queer mountaineer, waiting for somebody to help her down from the old surrey we came out in. This is one place where automobiles can't go.

PHILIP (*with a laugh*). Not on these roads. (*Bowing*.) I will go and escort Aunt Sophronia into this mountain retreat.

JUNE. Hurry and help her with her traps. She's brought a whole library with her — to improve her mind while she's here.

(PHILIP goes out up L. JUNE takes off her hat and

coat and sings a snatch of a spring song as she looks about the cabin. She goes to the fireplace down R. and stands on tip-toe to look at the long rifle that rests on a pair of buck-antlers above the fireplace.)

MRS. CULPEPPER *comes in, from outdoors, carrying an armful of books. She is middle-aged, stout, very serious and dignified. She sinks into a chair down L. with a sigh.*

MRS. CULPEPPER. Living near to nature's heart is beautiful, but it has its drawbacks. I've forgotten that book on Psychological Research and there isn't a library or bookstore within miles.

JUNE. Aunt Sophronia, have you brought a *cook* book?

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with disdain*). Cook book? No.

JUNE. That's what we'll need here. Oh, how I wish I had taken that course in Domestic Science last winter. (*Going up to Mrs. Culpepper and whispering.*) I can scramble eggs in a chafing-dish and make chocolate fudge. That's all I know about cooking. (*With a look of dismay.*) And Phil likes a girl who can cook.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with a flourish*). We've come here to rise above the mundane sphere and live in a world of ideals, as Murray Alden says.

PHILIP *enters from outdoors, loaded with baggage.*

PHILIP. I wish Murray Alden would carry his own baggage. Nice dodge of his to ask Carol to get out of the carriage a mile or two back and walk through the woods.

JUNE. But how delightfully romantic!

MRS. CULPEPPER. Yes, you know when we came to the turn in the road back there, Murray Alden said, "I hear nature's call — the call of the open road." And Carol sighed, "It's wonderful to be near nature's heart."

PHILIP (*dumping his load with the other baggage*). And before you could say Jack Robinson, they had the driver stop the horses. In a minute we were driving on and they were left behind — alone.

JUNE (*laughing*). Together, you mean.

PHILIP. Lucky dog — Murray Alden. But how will Ware take it? (JUNE *goes and sits on table down R.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER (*looking at JUNE with disapproval*). June, it is not ladylike to sit on the table.

JUNE (*swinging her feet*). This cabin isn't a ladylike place.

PHILIP (*going to the fireplace*). No — it's masculine. Look at this rifle. (MRS. CULPEPPER *goes to fireplace and looks at the rifle from a distance.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER. I hope it isn't loaded.

PHILIP (*with a wink at JUNE*). Careful, Mrs. Culpepper. It may go off if you *think* it's loaded. You know you're always telling us that our thoughts have a great influence — the power to move things. (MRS. CULPEPPER *backs away from the rifle and sinks into a chair near table down R.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER. It is just like Mr. Ware to keep a barbarous thing like that in his cabin.

JUNE. I wonder when Mr. Ware will be here. He said he would be at the village quite a while, putting in

a stock of supplies and then he would drive out with another team.

PHILIP (*going to place he left the baggage and beginning to put things in order*). I hope Carol and Alden get here first.

JUNE. If Mr. Ware saw them coming in together, it might open his eyes. He seems as blind as a bat.

MRS. CULPEPPER. None is so blind as he who will not see. He ought to release Carol from her engagement to him.

JUNE. Yes, everybody knows that Carol Pratt is Murray Alden's inspiration. They have been together on every possible occasion for the last two months — ever since he wrote that poem in praise of her beautiful hands.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with a lofty air*). She never misses one of his lectures on "The Aesthetics of Life." She sits there completely engrossed in listening to his wonderful thoughts. I have noticed too that he always walks home with her afterwards, but I wouldn't gossip about it for the world.

JUNE (*jumping down from the table*). No, indeed, we never gossip. (*With a smile at PHILIP.*) We just talk things over.

MRS. CULPEPPER. It would be a sad mesalliance for an idealistic girl like Carol to marry George Ware. He knows nothing of art or aesthetics.

PHILIP. Oh, Ware's a good sort, if he hasn't much education.

JUNE. He uses such odd language sometimes. I suppose he learned it here in the mountains.

PHILIP. I believe he used to live here, but he isn't much like the natives. Ware's a hustler and he makes money.

MRS. CULPEPPER. He will never satisfy Carol Pratt's artistic nature. A soulful man like Murray Alden is the one to fill her life. (JUNE goes up to PHILIP, who is trying to straighten out the baggage and kneels on the floor beside him.)

JUNE. Let me help you, Phil. Why do you suppose Mr. Ware invited us all to his mountain cabin? He must have known that this house party would give Carol an opportunity to see Murray constantly for two weeks. Mr. Ware is taking a great risk — unless he intends to give her up.

PHILIP. We are all taking a risk to let you girls see so much of the captivating poet, for it's as clear as daylight that all the women are dippy about him.

JUNE. Oh, nonsense. (*With a mischievous smile.*) Of course, Aunt Sophronia worships at his shrine.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with reproof in her voice*). June — how can you speak so flippantly of the tribute I pay to a great mind. Murray Alden lifts one above this drab world into the rosy sphere of the ideal.

JUNE. That's why Carol is so fond of him — And then he makes love so beautifully.

PHILIP (*looking at JUNE*). How do *you* know?

JUNE. Oh, a poet like Murray needs lots of practice in love-making.

PHILIP (*setting up his easel to the right of the window*). And he practices whenever there's a pretty girl around.

JUNE (*going to the open window*). I wonder how the affair will turn out. This is the very place for romance — the woods — the birds — Spring in all its beauty.

PHILIP. Romance in a cabin.

JUNE (*with a bewitching smile*). Of course, I mean Carol's romance. Here they can play out their little game.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*rising and going to other side of table*). How can you speak of such a serious affair as a game?

PHILIP. Marriage is like poker. It takes luck and pluck to play it.

JUNE. Is that why you don't venture?

PHILIP (*walking slowly toward JUNE*). Yes, I haven't the pluck to ask a girl to tie up to a poor fellow who paints pictures nobody buys and I wouldn't have the luck to win her if I had the pluck to ask her.

JUNE. In cards or love, nothing ventured nothing won.

PHILIP. If a girl would only show a fellow her hand it would be easier to play the game.

JUNE. Living under the same roof is like laying the cards on the table.

PHILIP (*giving a prolonged whistle as if an idea had struck him*). I wonder if Ware thought of that.

MRS. CULPEPPER. One thing is certain — Mr. Ware will have to give up Carol.

JUNE (*looking out of the window*). Hush! He's coming.

PHILIP. And Carol and Alden not here!

GEORGE WARE *comes in from outdoors with his arms full of packages of all sizes. He is a tall, lean, muscular man of thirty. There is something unconventional and homespun about him. He gives the impression of strength by his quiet, but forceful manner. The lines about his mouth indicate a firm will and tenacity of purpose. He speaks in a slow, deliberate manner, with a slight suggestion of the mountaineer's drawl.*

GEORGE (*stopping at the door*). Howdy! I thought you'd find the place all right. I wrote Bill Jakin to clean up the cabin and leave the door unlocked. You see, we trust our neighbors. The nearest one is a mile away.

PHILIP. Great place, you have here, Ware.

GEORGE (*coming down to C.*). Well, it's simple and I reckon what you folks want is the simple life. This isn't a millionaire camp in the Adirondacks with all the comforts of a New York hotel. No electric lights or bath-tubs here.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with affectation*). It refreshes my town weary soul to be in this atmosphere. Of course, I shall miss the class on the Technique of the Shaw plays and the Monday morning talks on Theosophy (*sighing*) — but sometimes my mind is tired.

GEORGE. That's why I invited you here — where we don't have any highbrow stuff. (*He puts his packages on the table down R.*) I've fetched out some provisions, for I reckon even artists and poets must eat.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Alas, in this mundane world it

still seems necessary, but I look forward to the day when we shall rise to a more ethereal plane.

JUNE (*looking at her aunt's stout figure*). Then it will be easier for you to keep down your weight, Aunt Sophronia.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*indignantly*). June, you know I have given up sweets and starches.

GEORGE. Mrs. Culpepper, this is a good place for dieting. The grocery store is five miles away and we haven't any telephone.

JUNE. Oh, it's an ideal spot — so romantic.

GEORGE (*looking around*). Where's Miss Pratt? Has she gone to her room? (*They all look self-conscious.*)

JUNE (*in confusion*). Well,—no. You see the woods were so beautiful that they — I mean she — she wanted to walk.

GEORGE. But she might lose her way walking in the woods alone. (*He starts towards the outside door.*) I'll go a piece and see if I can find her.

JUNE (*trying to stop him*). Don't go. She'll be here soon. You see,—well—she wasn't all alone. (*GEORGE turns back from the door.*)

GEORGE. No?

JUNE. Murray Alden was with her.

GEORGE (*hiding his feeling under an indifferent manner*). Then we needn't worry.

JUNE. Oh, no — we shouldn't worry.

GEORGE. It's a wild country round here and you girls must be mighty careful when you walk in the woods alone. (*He holds up a big gnarled stick that*

was standing near the door.) Take a big stick like this when you go out. You might meet Mr. Rattler. (*Comes down C.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER (*shudders*). Rattlesnakes! Oh, what a dangerous place.

PHILIP. I'll see that the girls don't go walking alone. (*He goes to the window and looks out.*) What a glorious view from the porch! I'm going to paint it tomorrow.

MRS. CULPEPPER. And I am going to begin my club paper. It's an ideal atmosphere for writing.

JUNE. And I feel as if I could sing all day.

MRS. CULPEPPER. It's a wonderful place for congenial spirits — artists, singers and poets.

GEORGE (*drily*). I reckon it is.

JUNE. Listen — I hear voices.

(*They listen while a man's voice is wafted through the open window. MURRAY and CAROL pass the window. GEORGE watches them.*)

MURRAY (*off stage*).

Earth is waking from winter's sleep,
Sunshine kisses hill-top and vale,
All nature throbs with life and love,
Spring cries "Awake" to wood and dale.
Love, 'tis May, 'tis May,
Greet the year's hey-day.
Let us live, 'tis meet,
Life is sweet, sweet, sweet.

A girlish laugh and then her echo, "Sweet, sweet, sweet." GEORGE *walks to the front of the stage and*

stands with his back to the window — serious, hurt, but self-controlled. CAROL and MURRAY come in from outdoors. She is radiant, he is dreamy. CAROL has taken off her hat and filled it with mountain laurel and pink and white azaleas. MURRAY is empty-handed. CAROL PRATT is twenty-three, sweet, slender and with a flower-like beauty. She has a wistful charm that makes her lovable. MURRAY ALDEN is about twenty-eight. He is effeminate, with dreamy eyes and a weak mouth. His hair is a little too long and his tie a little too large. He is self-centered and a poseur.

CAROL (*holding out her flower-laden hat*). Isn't this mountain laurel beautiful?

JUNE. It took you a long time to gather it.

CAROL (*throwing some flowers at JUNE*). And yet the walk seemed so short. (*With a sweet glance at MURRAY.*) Didn't it?

MURRAY (*with affectation*). The moments flitted by on golden wings.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Mr. Alden always says things so *beautifully* — so poetically. (*MURRAY bows and smiles with the condescending air of a man accustomed to the admiration of women. GEORGE looks at CAROL with longing and affection.*)

CAROL (*with enthusiasm*). The woods are wonderful — laurel and pink and white azaleas everywhere — little wild creatures jumping from the path at every step — wood thrushes singing — lights and shadows on the distant mountains — Oh, what a world of beauty, romance and — love.

MURRAY. It's an inspiration. Another stanza comes to me. (*All except GEORGE turn toward MURRAY.*)

Spring is budding on the hedge-rows,
Sunlight glimmers through leafy bough,
Sap is surging through the tree trunks,
Birds are calling to their mates now,
(*Turning to CAROL.*)

Love, 'tis May, 'tis May.
Greet the year's hey-day.
Let us live, 'tis meet,
Life is sweet, sweet, sweet.

CAROL (*sighing*). Beautiful.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Lovely.

JUNE (*clapping her hands*). Bravo.

CAROL. Let's put the flowers in water.

GEORGE. We haven't a vase in the cabin. (*He looks around, goes to shelf on wall down R. and takes down an old-fashioned pitcher.*) Will this old pitcher do?

CAROL. Just the thing. Where's the water?

GEORGE (*putting the pitcher on the table down R.*). There's a spring down in the glen. (*He picks up a tin pail near the fireplace.*) I'll go and fetch the water.

JUNE. Oh, let Phil and me go.

GEORGE (*handing the pail to PHIL*). I reckon the way will seem short for two.

JUNE. Isn't it funny to have to go outdoors for water?

PHIL. Yes, the simple life ended when water was first pumped into the kitchen and now we city-folks don't ask a friend to stay all night unless we can offer him a private bath.

GEORGE. No bath-tubs here.

JUNE. We don't need them. (*Embarrassed.*)
What I mean is — we like simplicity.

CAROL. Yes, here in this mountain cabin we can live in a sweet and simple way. We can be free.

JUNE (*waving her arms*). Free as the birds of the air.

PHILIP. Free from debts and duns.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Free to dwell upon the heights in a rare and pure atmosphere.

MURRAY. Free from the tyranny of modern conveniences. Let us shed things.

GEORGE (*drily*). Shed things. Hum!

MRS. CULPEPPER. I am afraid that Mr. Ware is not in sympathy with this artistic company and our desire to live the simple life.

GEORGE. When I was a boy, I lived this simple life you folks talk about. We don't shed things here in the mountains. We haven't anything to shed. This is the Land of Do-Without.

CAROL (*impatiently*). George, you are so prosaic. You don't feel the poetry of life.

GEORGE. I reckon I better leave the poetry to Alden.

JUNE. Come on, Phil, let's get the water. (JUNE and PHILIP go to the outside door, swinging the pail between them. GEORGE follows them. He hands PHIL the big stick and opens the door.)

GEORGE (*pointing down the path*). Go down that path until you come to the big poplar and you'll find the spring. (JUNE and PHILIP go out, passing the open window.)

MRS. CULPEPPER (*picking up an armful of books*). I think I will go to my room and unpack.

GEORGE (*crossing to door up R. and opening it*). This is your room, Mrs. Culpepper, and opening off from it is one for the young ladies. Which is your suitcase? (*He goes to the pile of baggage down L.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER (*going towards door up R.*). The one marked Sophronia Culpepper.

GEORGE (*picking up suit-case*). I'll tote it to your room for you.

MRS. CULPEPPER *goes out up R. followed by GEORGE with suit-case. MURRAY goes to CAROL, takes her hands in his and looks into her eyes with ardent feeling. A queer looking figure in a huge, black floppy hat, peers in through the window.*

BILL JAKIN (*leaning through the window*). Whar's Mr. Ware? Be he hyar? (*CAROL and MURRAY start in embarrassment.*)

CAROL. Yes, this is Mr. Ware's cabin.

GEORGE (*coming into the room at the sound of voices*). Howdy, Bill. Come in.

BILL JAKIN *enters from outside. He is a tall, lank mountaineer, with dark hair and beard. He wears a dark blue shirt, brown jeans and a big, black floppy hat. He has a grave and deliberate bearing and carries himself with proud independence. He speaks with a drawl and walks with a shambling gait and yet has an unmistakable dignity. As BILL enters GEORGE comes to C. and holds out his hand to BILL, while CAROL and MURRAY cross to L.*

GEORGE (*shaking hands with BILL*). How are you, Bill?

BILL. Prutty peart. Glad ter see ye. You-uns ain't been in these pairts since ye kem back from the other world.

GEORGE (*laughing*). Do you mean since I came back from France after the war?

BILL. Yes. Did ye see any of our boys in them furrin pairts?

GEORGE. There were lots of the mountain boys over there and they were always in the hottest fights.

BILL (*with slow, deliberate drawl*). I reckon us squirrel hunters can shoot some.

GEORGE. I 'low you can. (*Looking at CAROL and MURRAY*.) Oh, Bill, I want you to know my city friends. Miss Pratt and Mr. Alden — Mr. Jakin. (*CAROL smiles and MURRAY gives BILL a stiff, patronizing bow.*)

BILL (*looking at them with curiosity*). Whar do you-uns hail from?

CAROL. We came from Chicago.

BILL. Prutty big town, hain't it?

MURRAY (*pompously*). It's one of the great cities of the world.

BILL. La! I never seed a city. I was borned in the kentry and ain't never been out o' hit. I hev no call ter go nowhar else ez I knows on.

GEORGE. Bill, I want our city friends to see something of our life here in the mountains.

BILL. We-uns hev ter scrabble fer a living up hyar. (*He turns to MURRAY*.) Mister, what mought you-uns foller fer a living?

MURRAY (*proudly*). I'm a poet.

BILL (*greatly puzzled, looks at MURRAY with curiosity*). I seed farmers, an' storekeepers, an' blacksmiths, but I ain' never seed a po-ut afore.

CAROL. Mr. Alden writes verses and he has come to the mountains for inspiration—to put all the beauty of your woods into words.

BILL. Good la! Ain't that the beatinest? Whut ye aimin' ter do wi' the words?

MURRAY (*with scorn*). I'm afraid Mr. Jakin cannot understand poetry. Come, Miss Pratt, let us go out for a view of the distant mountains. (CAROL and MURRAY go outdoors. BILL stares after them.)

BILL. I reckon that thar slick-faced dude an' that prutty gal hev been a-keepin' company tergether some.

GEORGE (*with a keen glance*). Why do you think so?

BILL. Waal. I seed 'em through the window afore I kem in an' they war holdin' hands.

GEORGE (*frowning, walks impatiently away from window*). Miss Pratt likes poetry.

BILL. City gals air quar. Mountain gals like a *man*. Waal, George, ye ain't much on sweet-heartin' but I 'low a cabin air a good place fer courtin'.

GEORGE. I remember you were courtin' Liz the summer I left the mountain to seek my fortune in the world.

BILL. Hit war fifteen years come June an' Liz war the Belle of the Mountin'.

GEORGE. Did Big Pete ever come back to the mountain after you and Liz were married?

BILL. He's afeared to kem back.

GEORGE. That was a hard fight you and Big Pete had for Liz.

BILL (*walking over to the fireplace*). We fit fer her and I won. Then all Pete's folks war agin me and my folks.

GEORGE. There was a lot of shooting in the mountain that summer.

BILL (*fiercely*). Arter Pete burned down my barn an' pore live critters, we druv him from the mountin'. I tole him never to kem back no more.

GEORGE (*with great earnestness*). Bill, this shootin' must stop. These feuds are ag'in the law and ag'in religion. I thought our mountain folks were going to give up all this fighting.

BILL (*with a sullen look*). Pete done me dirt — an' I'm goin' ter wipe 'im out, ef he comes sneakin' back hyar.

GEORGE. There has been many a fight for a woman here, but I'll never rest, until the mountain — my mountain — is free from these wars.

BILL (*looking at the rifle*). I kem ter ax ye — cud I borry this rifle? Mine's plumb onery.

GEORGE (*looking at BILL with a keen, penetrating glance*). What do you want the rifle for?

BILL (*after a pause*). Waal — I'm fixin' ter go squirrel-hunting. (GEORGE goes to the fireplace and takes down the rifle.)

GEORGE. If it's only squirrels that you're wanting to shoot, you can have the rifle. My dad gave me this gun when I was a boy, and after all the bloodshed I saw in the mountains I swore that this gun should never shoot a human-crittur.

BILL. Mebbe, ye want it ter go squirrelin' yourself.

CAROL and MURRAY come in from outdoors.

GEORGE No. I'll not be squirrel-hunting this trip. (*He hands the gun to BILL.*) Take it, Bill, and make good use of it.

MURRAY. I hope there won't be any shooting while we are here.

BILL (*with contempt*). You-uns can stay in the cabin with the women-folks when the *men* go hunting.

JUNE and PHIL rush in from outdoors, very much excited. PHIL has the pail of water and JUNE, the big stick.

JUNE (*out of breath*). Oh, this is such a wild place. We hadn't gone past the first clump of laurel bushes before we saw a rattlesnake.

PHILIP. It was only a copperhead, June.

JUNE. I know it rattled, if it was only a copper-kettle.

GEORGE. Be prepared for adventures, Miss June. Here you will have to match your wits against the forces of nature and there'll be no help from servants or hired guides.

BILL. I reckon I'd better git on.

GEORGE. Tell Liz I'd like to see her and the children.

BILL. If you-uns can stand what we-uns has ter, why come over to our cabin and I'll ax the woman if she can git ye a bite.

GEORGE. Thank you, Bill. That's like old times. I love the mountain. My own folks are all gone, but

there's something about the place where you've lived as a boy that keeps calling you back.

BILL. Me and my old woman air mighty glad ye built this cabin hyar.

GEORGE. As long as you and Liz are here, I'll be coming back to it, now and then.

BILL. Ye'll allers find yer welcome in these pairts. Thank ye fer yer gun. Good-day. (*He goes out-doors.*)

MURRAY. A crude fellow — this mountaineer.

GEORGE. He's my friend.

(*JUNE fills the old pitcher with water and CAROL arranges the flowers in pitcher.*)

POSITIONS

CAROL

MURRAY

JUNE

GEORGE

PHILIP

JUNE. I'm going to change my dress for supper.

PHILIP. Put on a cook's apron, June. I'm as hungry as a bear.

JUNE (*looking dismayed*). Am I to be the cook for this party?

PHILIP. Sure. We're counting on you to serve our meals. (*GEORGE picks up JUNE's travelling bag and carries it to door up R.*)

GEORGE. This way, Miss June.

JUNE (*at the door*). I know we're going to have a perfectly lovely time. (*Goes out.*)

GEORGE. The men's sleeping quarters are in the loft upstairs. (*Crosses to door L.*) We go through the kitchen this way. (*He opens the door L.* MURRAY gives CAROL a long, lingering look and PHILIP picks up a travelling bag.)

PHILIP. There's your suit-case, Alden. You might carry it upstairs. I brought it in for you.

MURRAY (*dreamily*). I had forgotten all about it. Another stanza of my spring poem was taking form in my mind. (MURRAY and PHILIP *with their baggage go out* L. GEORGE and CAROL *are left alone*.)

CAROL (*re-arranging the flowers in the pitcher*). It was good of you, George, to invite us all here.

GEORGE. I did it for you, little girl. I want you to have what you want.

CAROL. I have been longing for this — the beauty of nature — poetry — congenial companionship.

GEORGE (*looking at her with a penetrating glance*). And for two or three weeks you are to have all that — nature — poetry — and *congenial* companionship.

CAROL. Oh, it's wonderful.

GEORGE. I hope you'll be comfortable. Life here is a real return to nature. It's pioneering — all right.

CAROL (*sweetly*). I know you'll keep us comfortable. You always know how to do the practical things.

GEORGE. But I'll not be here. (CAROL, *in great surprise, drops the flower she holds and looks at* GEORGE.)

CAROL. Not be here? What do you mean?

GEORGE. I must catch the next train back to Chicago.

CAROL. Why, George, you mustn't leave us. We depend upon you to — to do things for us.

GEORGE. Phil will be here.

CAROL (*with disdain*). Oh, Phil.

GEORGE. And you'll have Alden.

CAROL (*doubtfully*). Yes — we will have Mr. Al-

den, but I thought, of course, you would stay for your own house-party.

GEORGE. No, I just came down to see you settled.

CAROL (*with intense feeling*). It isn't right for you to go off this way. Why are you going?

GEORGE (*laconically*). Business.

CAROL (*impatiently*). Business, business. It's always business with you. A woman can't have a more dangerous rival than business.

GEORGE. I am leaving you with the things you want — poetry and congenial companionship.

CAROL (*in great excitement*). George, you don't know how important it is for you to stay here — how much is at stake.

GEORGE (*looking at her with keen eyes*). No?

CAROL. If you really cared for me you would give up everything to stay here.

GEORGE (*after a pause*). Mebbe it's because I care that I'm going away.

CAROL. For the last time, I ask you, — will you give up your business affairs and stay?

GEORGE. I'm sorry, little girl, but it's impossible.

CAROL (*turning away coldly*). Very well. I'm glad that all men are not so practical. I'm thankful there are some men with a feeling of romance. You have no more sentiment than that mountaineer who calls his wife — the old woman and doesn't know what love is.

GEORGE (*slowly*). Yes, I reckon I *am* like Bill Jakin. I belong to the mountains too. I was born in a cabin like this — only smaller — one room and a lean-to. My folks were powerful poor. I milked the cow, went hunting and worked in the fields — lived on

co'n bread and pork. In your world of ease and comfort you know nothing of a life like this.

CAROL. The mountaineers seem so crude.

GEORGE. Yes, we are, because we don't get a chance. I went to school two months in the year — and mighty poor schooling it was. That's why I can't talk like your *congenial* friends.

CAROL (*repentant*). Oh, I didn't mean you, George.

GEORGE. I knew nothing of the outside world until a circuit-rider came here and told us about it. Then I wanted to go beyond these hills. (*Going to the window.*) Out there where the sun seems to blaze a trail — and I kept on wanting to go until — (*With determination.*) I found the way.

CAROL (*looking at him in wonderment*). George, you always find the way to the thing you want, don't you?

GEORGE. There are some things a man can get by fighting for and there are others that aren't won that-away. (*Looking at her with tenderness.*) Sometimes, the thing a man wants more than all the world is as hard to reach as that sun going down over there. (*Abruptly.*) I must hurry to catch that train. The team is waiting for me down the road. Goodbye, Carol. Have a good time. (*At the door up L. he turns and looks at CAROL with longing. He goes out, leaving the door open. CAROL stands still a moment and then goes to the door and calls.*)

CAROL. George — George. (*No answer.*)

MURRAY comes in from L.

MURRAY. Carol.

CAROL (*turning from the door and coming to center*

of room). George has gone back to the city. Business affairs.

MURRAY (*smiling*). That's the way with these practical man — always business first.

CAROL. Oh, I wish he hadn't gone.

MURRAY. Why, Carol?

CAROL. Murray, do you think it is right for us to stay here without him?

MURRAY. Why not?

CAROL. You see — you see, — George doesn't know how we feel.

MURRAY (*scornfully*). He is too prosaic to understand your poetic nature. He is clay and you are a flower.

CAROL. You mustn't talk that way. It isn't right. I can't let you.

MURRAY (*going up to CAROL*). Carol, why will you starve your soul and refuse my adoration?

CAROL. I don't know what to do. Companionship with you means so much to me, but we must not forget that I have promised to marry George.

MURRAY. Here in this beautiful spot, don't you feel the call of life — and of love?

CAROL (*yielding*). It is like a dream come true.

MURRAY. Here — far from the world — soul calls to soul and we will think of nothing but the joy of love. (*He takes her in his arms.*)

JUNE *rushes into the room from up R.* CAROL and MURRAY *turn from each other in embarrassment.*

JUNE. Oh, Mr. Ware, please come and close the shutters for us.

CAROL. Mr. Ware has left for the city — on pressing business.

JUNE (*with a significant glance at CAROL and MURRAY and a laugh*). Oh, I think he's left pressing business.

MRS. CULPEPPER, *in an elaborate negligée, bursts in from up R.*

MRS. CULPEPPER (*in great excitement*). Mr. Ware, Mr. Ware, come quick.

CAROL (*impatiently*). Mr. Ware is not here.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*stunned*). Not here? (*Excited.*) And there's a wild animal flying around my room.

JUNE (*laughing*). It's only a bat.

PHILIP *appears at door L. with his face covered with soapy lather and a razor in his hand.*

PHILIP. Say, Ware, how do you shave without a mirror?

CAROL (*hopelessly*). Mr. Ware has gone.

PHILIP. Gone? (*He gives a long, low whistle.*)

POSITIONS.

MRS. CULPEPPER.

CAROL MURRAY.

JUNE.

PHILIP.

CURTAIN.

A CABIN COURTSHIP.

THE SECOND ACT

SCENE: *The same as Act I. Two weeks later.*

The young people have decorated the cabin with wild flowers and ferns. PHILIP'S easel with a sketch stands to the right of the window. MRS. CULPEPPER'S books are on a shelf R. A table L. is just as it was left after a meal, with disarranged and soiled dishes. It was evidently set for five and the chairs have been pushed back.

MURRAY comes in from outdoors with some wood in his arms, puts it down in front of the fireplace, kneels and tries to build a fire. After several unsuccessful attempts, he stops, takes a writing pad and pencil out of his pocket and begins to write. He becomes absorbed in his writing. He murmurs to himself.

MURRAY.

Buds are bursting into flowers,
Dew is sparkling on uncut grass,
Comrades shout on the open road,
Blithe youth whispers to bonny lass:
Love, 'tis May, 'tis May.

MRS. CULPEPPER with a shawl over her shoulders enters from her room up R. She sees MURRAY writing and the fireless fireplace. She watches him with growing indignation.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Haven't you built a fire yet? I am slowly freezing to death. (*Shivers and draws her shawl closer.*) I know that this damp weather will

give me the rheumatism. I feel it creeping over me now. I never realized before how comfortable steam heat is. There ought to be some way of making this cabin more livable. (*With a despairing note in her voice.*) Murray Alden, why haven't you built that fire? (*Sits down near table R.*)

MURRAY (*starting as from a reverie*). I began to build the fire and then I thought of a few lines I wanted to add to a poem and I forgot the fire. (*He studies over the lines on the paper.*) "Blithe youth whispers to bonny lass." I have worked and worked over the metre in the last stanza, but the beat isn't right yet.

MRS. CULPEPPER. How can you be writing poetry when we are cold and damp and uncomfortable?

MURRAY (*reproachfully*). How you have changed in two weeks. I thought you longed to live in an atmosphere of poetry.

MRS. CULPEPPER. I do, but I want the chill taken off. (*Shivering.*) Of course, it has been a wonderful fortnight. We have been living on such a high plane, — but I would like a little comfort.

MURRAY (*dreamily*). It's a time never to be forgotten.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with asperity*). Never.— Oh, I'm not sorry we came, but I don't want to have the rheumatism. We must have some consideration for our bodies and when you are slowly (*shivering*) freezing to death, you cannot be in a perfectly happy frame of mind. (*She rises and goes to select a book from the shelf R.*) I'm going to read Prof. Loftus on "Soul Vibrations." (*At door up R.*) Do build that fire. (*She goes out shivering.*)

MURRAY, *who has been engrossed in his writing during MRS. CULPEPPER'S harangue, sighs, puts down pencil and paper and tackles the fire again.* CAROL *comes in from the kitchen. She is dressed in a light summer frock over which she wears a sweater coat. She carries a kerosene lamp and a greasy cloth. She sighs when she sees MURRAY and the fireless fireplace.*

MURRAY (*looking up*). Carol. (CAROL *puts down the lamp on table R. and takes off the chimney to adjust the wick. MURRAY goes to her and takes her hands in his.*) You should not spoil your beautiful hands with this menial work.

CAROL. The lamp gave such a poor light last night that *somebody* had to clean it before we could use it again, but it is horrid, greasy work.

MURRAY. Come, my flower of the Woodland, let us forget these trivial things. What a happy two weeks we have had together!

CAROL. Yes. (*Hesitates and glances at the fireplace.*) But don't you think it is cold here? Please start the fire.

MURRAY (*looking at the fireplace in a helpless way*). Yes — yes — Carol — presently. I want to talk with you now. (*He leads her to the fireplace seat and they sit down.*) Oh, Carol, what a joy it is to be with you, my inspiration. I could write poetry all day with you near to inspire me. (*With a self-absorbed air.*) All nature is crying 'Tis May, come and live. How happy one can be far away from the world, with nature and those we love.

CAROL (*with hesitation*). Yes — yes. (*Shiver-*

ing.) But don't you think we ought to have a fire, Murray?

MURRAY. Ah, Carol, does it matter whether there is a fire on the hearth or not as long as the sacred flame of my love is lighted at your altar? But I'll start the fire since you wish it. (*With a helpless air.*) That is, I'll try. (*He kneels to light the fire while CAROL watches him.*)

CAROL. I never dreamed that it was so hard to build a good fire. We have always lived where the fire came ready made. You seem to have some difficulty with it. (*Going to MURRAY.*) Let me help. Why — the wood is wet.

MURRAY. We forgot to bring it in last night before the rain. (*MURRAY stands helplessly by while CAROL tries to light the fire.*)

CAROL (*with a dejected air*). This wood won't burn. Why didn't somebody remember that we would need wood for a fire?

MURRAY (*impatiently*). Really, we ought to have servants to do this work.

CAROL (*getting up from the hearth, with a sigh*). We'll have to get along without a fire. There are such a lot of things we city folks don't know how to do. But it is wonderful to be here together, isn't it?

MURRAY. A golden dream.

CAROL (*sadly and wistfully*). If dreams could only last.

MURRAY (*with ardor*). Carol, let's make our lives a dream that will last forever.

CAROL (*drawing back*). You forget — George.

MURRAY. Do you love him?

CAROL (*shaking her head slowly and putting her hand on his arm*). Not as I love you, Murray. When I am with George I feel that I can depend on his strength and I know that he will take care of me, but with you it is different. You understand me. (*Wistfully.*) I have always longed for romance and you have brought it to me.

MURRAY. Then, Carol, come to me. Will you not be happy to feel that you are the inspiration of poems that may live for ages?

CAROL (*carried away by her emotions*). Yes — yes. It is poetry and life and love that I want. (*CAROL holds out her hands to him. He takes her in his arms and kisses her.*)

MURRAY. My Carol — my inspiration. What a glorious thing is love! (*Egotistically.*) Today, I shall write the greatest poem I have ever written. (*CAROL draws away in surprise and reproach.*)

CAROL. Murray, do you never forget your poetry, even when you are telling a woman you love her?

MURRAY (*with a superior air*). Carol, my love is the inspiration of my poetry. A writer feeds on love. I turn every experience into words — beautiful words. (*CAROL walks away from him in doubt and perplexity.*)

CAROL (*half to herself*). I wonder — I wonder if poetry may not be as dangerous a rival as business.

MURRAY. When is Mr. Ware coming?

CAROL. I expect him today, but he may not come until tomorrow. (*She takes a letter out of her sweater pocket.*) Bill Jakin brought this letter yesterday. It's the only one George has written since we came here. (*Reading letter.*) "Dear Carol: If af-

fairs at the lumber yards permit, I will arrive at the cabin Tuesday. I hope you are having a good time. As ever yours, George."

MURRAY (*with disdain*). Does he call that a love letter?

CAROL. George doesn't write poetry, but he usually sends me longer letters than that. (*She looks at the letter with a puzzled expression.*) I can't understand his actions since we came here. It seems so strange for him to go back to the city and leave us here to struggle for food and fire and the ordinary comforts of life.

MURRAY. It is a very inconsiderate way for him to treat you.

CAROL. He has always been thoughtful of me and I think he must have a reason for acting this way.

MURRAY. Can't you see, Carol, that George Ware is so absorbed in his work and practical affairs that he has no time for love?

CAROL (*looking at the letter again*). I know this letter seems very matter-of-fact and yet George has always been doing lovely things for me ever since we were engaged.

MURRAY. A man who won't leave his business for you now, will neglect you after marriage. A humdrum fellow like Ware will never make you happy. (*Going up to her.*) You crave poetry and romance and these I lay at your feet, my beautiful flower — my inspiration.

CAROL. Oh, Murray, it is so hard to see the way. I'm like a child listening to a fairy tale and asking, "What will happen next?"

MURRAY (*putting his arm around her*). Dear fairy child, I will tell you what will happen next. Tonight, you and I will slip away and go out into the world together.

CAROL (*drawing away*). No — no — I can't do that. I can't break my word to George. We've been engaged two years. I am bound to him.

MURRAY. You and I are free spirits and should not be bound by the practical ideas and stupid conventions of others.

CAROL. But the world may not understand that we are free spirits. And you know, Murray, it is hard to live like a spirit when you are a human being.

MURRAY (*with reproach*). I thought I had taught you to live on a higher plane.

CAROL. Yes, Murray, we have been trying to live on a high plane ever since we came here and there have been many puzzling problems. (*She looks into the fireless fireplace.*) Oh, it's so cold.

MURRAY (*turning away with wounded pride*). Of course, if you are going to be held back by such trivial things as fires and food, we must give up our great adventure.

CAROL (*still looking into the fireplace*). It is so hard to see the way. I wonder why George left us here alone.

MURRAY. George is an uneducated man.

CAROL. Self-educated, you mean.

MURRAY. He is crude and calls this Bill Jakin his friend.

CAROL. George was born here in the mountains.

MURRAY. Yes, and you'll find that he is as rough

and primitive as these backwoodsmen — a cave man.— Didn't you see him hand his rifle to Bill Jakin and tell him to make good use of it?

CAROL. Yes, I wondered why he gave a rifle to a dangerous man like Bill.

MURRAY. No doubt Ware encourages the natives in their feuds. Do you want to marry a man who is like these mountaineers?

CAROL (*shudders*). No — no.

MURRAY. Then go away with me tonight.

MRS. CULPEPPER *comes in from up R. with a book in her hand.* MURRAY and CAROL *separate with a guilty start.*

MRS. CULPEPPER. Oh, Murray, come and try to fix that leak in my room. (MURRAY *looks exasperated at the interruption.*) I am reluctant to ask a poet to do prosaic things like that, but when it rains the water drips on my bed. A storm is coming up and that leak ought to be mended.

MURRAY (*impatiently*). Really, we ought to have a servant about the place to perform these tasks.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with a scornful look at MURRAY*). We do need somebody who can do things. Poets are delightfully romantic, but we need a man who can build fires and mend leaks. (*She puts the book on "Soul Vibrations" on the shelf R.*)

MURRAY. Show me where the leak is.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with despair in her voice*). Over my bed. (*She goes into her room.*)

MURRAY (*turning to CAROL and speaking hurriedly*). Carol, I will see one of the neighbors about a team to

drive us to town. Meet me down at the turn in the road where the 'big sycamore stands.

CAROL. When?

MURRAY. At eight o'clock tonight.

CAROL. I may not be alone with you again. I think George will be here this afternoon. (*She stops — thinks — looks around and goes to a jar of laurel standing on table R.*) After I have seen him, if I decide to go away with you tonight, I'll take a spray of laurel and put it in my hair.

MURRAY. I'll have the team waiting. You can slip out —

MRS. CULPEPPER (*off stage*). Murray Alden.

MURRAY. Coming, Mrs. Culpepper. (*To CAROL.*) Tonight, my love.

CAROL. The laurel. (*MURRAY goes into MRS. CULPEPPER'S room. CAROL gazes pensively into the fireplace and then goes to the table L. and begins to pick up the dishes.*)

JUNE, in a big gingham apron, comes in from the kitchen.

JUNE (*holding out a pan of biscuits*). Look, Carol. Did you ever see biscuits like these? (*CAROL goes over and examines the biscuits.*)

CAROL (*with a laugh*). No — never.

JUNE. They're nice and round, but they are flat as pancakes and as hard as rocks. (*She puts the biscuits on table L. and sinks into a chair.*) Oh, I'm so discouraged. This is the second failure today. That omelette I made for lunch was the leatherest thing I

ever ate. Oh, dear, oh, dear. And Phil likes a girl who can cook.

CAROL (*scraping the dishes*). Here's some of the omelette. Even the mountain air doesn't give the men an appetite for our cooking.

JUNE. I know that my value in the matrimonial market is going down fast.

CAROL. Don't take the cooking so seriously, June.

JUNE. It's all right for you to take that attitude, Carol Pratt. You have two men so deeply in love with you that they would eat hay if served by your beautiful hands, but my case is different. I thought this house-party might — well (*with a laugh of embarrassment*) — help things along with Phil, and now trying to cook has spoiled my chances.

CAROL. The house-party isn't over. Many things may happen yet.

JUNE. All the *romantic* things happen to you. I never dreamed that cooking was so important. I can sing and dance all the newest steps. (*Jumps up and dances a few steps.*) Wouldn't you think that would make a man happy and contented? But no — a girl must know how to *feed* him to *keep* him. Carol, what do you suppose happened to these biscuits?

CAROL. Where's your cook-book?

JUNE. In the kitchen. I propped it up in front of me while I mixed them and I thought I did everything the book said.

CAROL. You get the cook-book while I pick up the dishes. I wish we could throw them out when they are dirty. I've washed dishes until last night I dreamed

of dishes, stacks and stacks of dishes, piled high on all sides.

JUNE. I have a plan. Let's have the men draw lots for the privilege of washing the supper dishes.

CAROL (*shaking her head*). That would never do.

JUNE. Why not?

CAROL. It might fall to Murray and he couldn't do it.

JUNE. Your dear poet hasn't done a stroke of work since we came here.

CAROL. A gifted man like Murray Alden should not be expected to do commonplace things. We ought to be glad to wait on a poet.

JUNE (*at the door L.*). You are a good little waiter. (*She goes into the kitchen.*)

CAROL *picks up a few dishes and then goes and takes a spray of laurel out of the jar, looks at it and puts it back.* JUNE *is heard singing in the kitchen. She comes in studying the cook-book.*

JUNE (*reading from cook-book*). Two pints of flour — yes — butter the size of an egg — yes, three heaping teaspoonfuls of baking-powder — oh — that's what I forgot, the baking-powder. (*Sighs.*) Who would have thought that a little thing like that would make such a difference! Don't tell Phil.

CAROL. We can hide the biscuits and he'll never know.

JUNE (*looking around in great excitement*). Where shall we put them? (CAROL *carries the biscuits to the table in front of window.*)

CAROL. Let's hide them behind these plants.
(JUNE goes up and snatches the biscuits away.)

JUNE. No — no — that's too near Phil's easel.
Quick. I think I hear somebody coming.

CAROL. Hide them behind some books. (JUNE rushes to the shelf R., near the fireplace, takes down some books, puts the pan of biscuits on shelf and places books in front of it.)

JUNE. Now, they are safe. Phil will never go to the shelf where Aunt Sophronia keeps her books. (Reading the titles on the books.) He isn't interested in Hindu Philosophy or Soul Vibrations.

MRS. CULPEPPER comes in from up R., leaving the door of her room open, showing MURRAY, on top of the step-ladder, helplessly trying to mend the leak in the ceiling. After a few minutes of futile effort he stops, takes a note-book and pencil from his pocket and begins to write in blissful oblivion of his surroundings.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Carol, when is Mr. Ware coming?

CAROL (with a little start). This afternoon or tomorrow. Why?

MRS. CULPEPPER. I hope he'll come before we have a storm. Murray is trying to mend that leak, but he goes about it as if he had never handled a hammer before. (JUNE bursts out laughing.)

CAROL. What's the matter, June?

JUNE. I had a mental picture of Murray mending a roof.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Come here and you will have a real picture of him.

(MRS. CULPEPPER goes towards the open door. CAROL and JUNE follow her and look in. When MRS. CULPEPPER sees MURRAY writing poetry in entire forgetfulness of the leak she gasps.)

MRS. CULPEPPER (*in exasperation*). Murray Alden!

CAROL (*putting her finger on her lips*). Hush. Don't disturb him. The fires of genius are burning. He may be composing a great poem.

JUNE. The fires of genius won't keep out the dampness.

MRS. CULPEPPER. And a poem won't keep the rain from pouring on my bed. Oh, I wish we had somebody who could do things.

CAROL. I wonder why George went away. (*She picks up a tray of dishes and goes into the kitchen.*)

Enter PHILIP from outdoors with palette and brushes.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Philip, I don't suppose that your artistic soul can come down to the prosaic plane either.

PHILIP. What for?

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with a glance toward the open door*). To mend a leaky roof. (PHILIP looks up at MURRAY and whistles.)

PHILIP. I'd call that *rising* to the prosaic plane. It's time all leaks were mended for a storm is coming up. I just saw some great buzzards flying swiftly southward and the clouds are rolling up in a white mist.

JUNE. Oh, dear, what shall we do? Phil, have you been in town for the mail?

PHIL (*giving a long, low whistle*). Mail? No, I forgot it was my turn to tramp to town for the letters. I've been sketching down by the cliff. There's a superb view there. (MURRAY, *roused out of his reverie by the voices, comes down from the step-ladder.*)

JUNE (*with a sigh*). Sketching, of course. I haven't heard from home in a week.

MRS. CULPEPPER. And I haven't seen a newspaper since we came here.

JUNE. This is life in a wilderness. (MURRAY *walks into the room, closing the door after him.*)

PHILIP. I hope you mended that leak, Murray. There's a big storm coming up.

MURRAY. We should have brought a servant with us to do these things. (MURRAY *goes into kitchen.*)

JUNE. If Mr. Ware were here we wouldn't need to worry.

MRS. CULPEPPER. I am going to calm my mind by reading Hindu Philosophy. (*She goes to shelf R. to take down book. JUNE, greatly agitated, tries to stop her.*)

JUNE. Oh, Aunt Sophronia, you don't want Hindu Philosophy now. Read something else. (MRS. CULPEPPER, *not to be turned from her purpose, takes down two books in front of the biscuits.*)

MRS. CULPEPPER. In the present crisis nothing but Hindu Philosophy will sustain me. (*She goes into her room with the books.*)

(JUNE *stands in front of shelf. PHILIP watches her with a knowing smile. He goes towards the book-shelf. JUNE backs up against shelf.*)

PHILIP (*imitating Mrs. CULPEPPER's manner*). I

need philosophy to sustain me in the present crisis.

JUNE. You know, Philip Russell, that you don't want a book to read.

PHILIP. I do — I can't live without books.

JUNE. We can live without books, but not without cooks. (PHILIP *pushes JUNE aside and discovers the pan of biscuits. He pulls it out and gives a surprised whistle. JUNE watches him in dismay.*)

PHILIP. What are these little flat things all in a row?

JUNE (*with a forced laugh*). Those — oh — yes. They're a new kind of cracker. I was just experimenting.

PHILIP (*holding up a hard, flat biscuit*). They were not made to eat, were they? (*He drops the biscuit on the floor and it falls like a stone.*)

JUNE (*almost in tears*). If we hadn't come to this God-forsaken place, you wouldn't have had a chance to make fun of my cooking.

PHILIP (*laughing and taking a book from the shelf*). Cheer up, June. Let's read "Soul Vibrations" together.

CAROL and MURRAY *come in from the kitchen. All are startled by a knock at the door.*

JUNE. Who can that be?

CAROL. Some of our distance neighbors, perhaps.

CAROL *opens the door up L. and LIZ JAKIN comes in. She is a tall, thin woman about thirty, but looks older. She wears a cheap, faded calico dress and a pink sun-bonnet and coarse shoes. She carries a large market*

basket. The poise of her head suggests native pride and dignity.

CAROL (*pleasantly*). Come in.

LIZ. Good-day. (*Drawls.*) Bein' you-uns wantin' some nice fraish vegetables? Bill — he's my man — 'lowed as thar's some city folks in Mr. Ware's cabin and so I kem a piece to fetch you-uns these vegetables.

CAROL. Yes, we will be glad to buy some. Are you Mrs. Jakin?

LIZ. I be. My man's a-komin'. He stopped down yonder ter shoot him a squirrel.

CAROL (*placing a chair for LIZ*). Won't you sit down? (*LIZ puts her basket on the floor and sits down.*)

LIZ. You-uns air mighty perlite, but I cain't set fer a long spell kase thar's a storm a-komin' up. I seen buzzards flyin' southward as I kem in. (*LIZ opens her basket and CAROL and JUNE inspect the vegetables, JUNE sitting on the floor. PHILIP and MURRAY look on in amusement.*)

JUNE (*holding up some beets*). Shall we have these things?

PHILIP. Do you know how to cook them?

JUNE (*with a toss of her head*). Carol and I have decided we need a man-cook — a *chêf* — for this establishment and you and Murray can draw lots to see who will have the honor.

MURRAY (*with disdain*). A very foolish idea.

LIZ (*looking at the city folks in amazement*). Would you-uns like a nice briled chicken ter-morrow?

JUNE. Oh, that would be delicious. Does it come already dressed?

LIZ (*puzzled*). Dressed? No — mountin' chickens hain't wearin' dresses. I'll fetch it alive.

JUNE (*in dismay*). Oh, dear, no. Do you know what to do with a live chicken, Carol? — Murray? — Phil? (*They all shake their heads.*) We can't have chickens, Mrs. Jakin, unless they come already prepared.

LIZ. Laws-amassy. I hev hearn tell that city folks air mighty helpless!

CAROL. Since we came to the mountain we've learned that there are lots of things we can't do.

(*PHIL begins to sketch LIZ.*)

LIZ. I went down into the valley, wunst, and I declar' I nigh sultered. 'Pears like thar ain't breath enough to go round, with all them people. An' the water don't do a body no good; an' you cain't eat hearty, nor sleep good o' nights. I didn't keer fer the town. I hankered fer the mounting.

MURRAY (*with superior air*). But don't you want some modern improvements?

LIZ (*shaking her head*). I don't keer fer them improvements. Some calls them progress and sez they put money ter circulatin'. So they do, but who gits it?

CAROL. Aren't you lonesome here so far away from people?

LIZ. Lonesome? Waal, in winter many-atime we-uns don't see no folks fer weeks tergether. Thar's only the dumb critters, the sky and the wind in the singin' pines. But lonesome? Naw, I hain't lonesome. I got Bill an' the children. (*Proudly.*) I reckon 'tain't every woman kin have the man she loves.

BILL *comes in from outdoors carrying GEORGE'S rifle.*

LIZ (*to BILL*). Did ye git ye a squirrel?

BILL. La — no! I war lying in the laurel a-waitin' fer Big Pete.

LIZ (*greatly excited*). Big Pete hyar?

BILL. Waal, I hearn that thar good-fer-nuthin' critter war sneakin' around hyar day afore yesterday.

LIZ. What brung Pete back from Kaintucky?

BILL. Folks tole me he sez he kem back ter git even.

LIZ (*getting up and speaking in imploring tones*). Oh, Bill, be keerful. Pete air a tremenjous man an' mighty rough when he air drunk on moonshine.

BILL (*coolly*). Don't ye fret. (*Touching his rifle.*) I lay out ter see him fust. I oughter hev kilt the cussed critter afore, but he won't git shet o' me nex' time.

MURRAY (*in a panic*). I hope that there will not be any deeds of violence while our little party is on the mountain.

BILL (*looking at him scornfully*). Waal, ye needn't be skeered out o' yer boots. Ye kin stay in the cabin wi' the women, but I hev been a-tryin' ter make out ter shoot that thar Pete ever since he tried to steal my gal an' burned down my barn and pore live critters kase he didn't git her. Naw, he oughtn't ter be let live.

MURRAY. This is very distressing. You ought to go to law and not try to settle differences in this barbarous way.

BILL. Law? We-uns hyar on the mounting hev ter take the law in our own hands. A pore man cain't fight money in the courts. As fer bush-whacking. Hit's as fa'r fer one as 'tis fer t'other. Ye cain't fight a man fa'r and squar who'll shoot ye in the back.

(JUNE gathers up the vegetables and CAROL pays LIZ.)

LIZ (to CAROL). Ain't Mr. Ware komin' down right soon?

CAROL. Today or tomorrow, I think.

LIZ. I'll be powerful glad ter see him. He air mighty good ter we-uns, ain't he, Bill?

BILL. I reckon he air. We-uns think a heap o' George Ware.

LIZ (*with a scornful look at MURRAY*). He air plumb true-hearted an' he ain't one o' them helpless critters nuther. He war fotched up in the mounting. He air powerful sot, too. I reckon when he hev tuk a' holt, he'll nuver gin up.

CAROL (*looking at MURRAY*). Mr. Ware is very firm.

LIZ. He'll git whut he wants ez sartain ez the sun.

BILL (*at the door*). Come along, Liz, time's a-wasting. (*Looking out.*) I do declar' pears ter me we air goin' ter hev a mighty big storm.

JUNE. Does it rain here often?

LIZ (*going towards the door*). Toler'ble hard sometimes. Last May it rained and rained and Preacher Jim 'lowed ez it might rain forty days and forty nights. He tole we-uns that the Lord war goin' ter send a flood kase thar war such a powerful lot o' wickedness. But all ter wunst the rain stopped.

'Pears like we might hev that flood now, kase Preacher Jim 'lows ez the worl' air gettin' wickedder. I dunno — mebbe. Good-day, folks.

JUNE (*to LIZ*). You had better wait until after the storm. You'll be wet through, if you go now.

LIZ (*at the door*). I ain't sugar, nor salt, nor nobody's honey. (*She goes outdoors.*)

BILL. Ef you-uns see that dad-burned scoundrel Pete sneakin' round these pairts, I'll be obleeged ef ye tole me. I thought I seed him a piece back yander jes a while ago. I wish ye well. (*He goes outdoors.*)

(*Consternation on all their faces.*)

JUNE. Cheerful prospect! Forty days of rain while we are caged in this mountain cabin — a leak in the roof and no fire.

CAROL (*looking out of the window*). See — the mists are like flocks of white sheep. The wind is blowing the leaves from the trees — the dark clouds are piling up. Oh — what a driving rain!

(*Outside the wind howls and whizzes, the rain beats against the window and roof.*)

PHILIP (*with a disconsolate air*). Oh, for a walk up Michigan Boulevard!

JUNE. And a look in the shop windows.

PHILIP. And a good square meal at the club.

JUNE (*indignantly*). Do you mean, Philip Russell, that you don't have square meals here?

PHILIP (*holding up one of the biscuits*). Far be it from me to slander a dear little cook like you.

MRS. CULPEPPER *rushes in from her room up R. very much excited.*

MRS. CULPEPPER. Murray Alden, you didn't fix that leak and the water is just pouring on my bed.

MURRAY (*bewildered and annoyed*). I'm sorry, Mrs. Culpepper. I worked over it a long time.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Oh, dear, what shall we do if this storm keeps up?

Enter GEORGE WARE, from outdoors, wet but cheerful. He wears a rain-coat and has his arms full of packages. From his entrance to the end of the act he dominates the scene.

GEORGE. Hello. How are you all? Didn't you expect me today?

CAROL. Not in this storm. And from your letter I thought you might not be able to tear yourself away from the lumber yards.

GEORGE. I hustled things up at the office, because I thought I might make myself useful here. (*He goes to the table R. and puts down his packages.*) I brought down a few supplies.

JUNE. Goody! Our pantry is almost as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard and the grocery is a long way off.

GEORGE (*takes off his wet coat and carries it to the fireplace*). What! No fire this damp day? (*Looking at CAROL with solicitude.*) Aren't you cold?

CAROL. We are a little chilly, but we couldn't make the fire burn.

GEORGE (*examining the wood*). Wood — wet. I see. Well, I reckon we'll have to have a fire and be comfortable. (*He raises the top of the fireplace seat and takes out some dry wood.*)

CAROL. We never thought of looking there for wood.

GEORGE. I always keep a supply of dry wood here. (*He takes a match from his pocket.*) When I was a boy sometimes we didn't have a match in the cabin. If the embers on the hearth went out, some one had to tramp to a neighbor's to "borry fire" and fetch it home on a torch. We had to be mighty careful about our fires. Here in the mountains, it's hard to *get* things and so we have to learn to *do* things. (*GEORGE builds the fire while the others watch him. As the fire begins to burn.*) It will soon warm up.

MRS. CULPEPPER. Thank goodness! I was afraid I was going to have the rheumatism.

GEORGE (*looking at CAROL and MURRAY who are standing at L.*). Come up to the fire and get warm.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*throws off her shawl and goes to fireplace. Warming her hands.*). I am so glad you've come, Mr. Ware.

GEORGE (*still looking at CAROL*). A fire on the hearth does make a cabin cozy. Carol, won't you come over here?

CAROL (*coldly*). I like it where I am, thank you.

(*JUNE and PHILIP go up to fire. The storm still rages outside.*)

JUNE (*seating herself on the fireplace seat*). It's good to have it comfortable inside when there's such a storm outside.

PHILIP. Ware — any danger of this roost being blown off the mountain?

GEORGE. I've seen it blow, here on top of Pine

Mountain, till a horse couldn't stand up against it. You'll spy, tomorrow, where those trees out there have been wind-thrown and busted to kindling.

JUNE. Oh, dear — oh, dear. What will we do?

PHILIP (*sitting down beside JUNE*). Die together.

GEORGE (*in reassuring tones*). This cabin has stood through a heap of storms and I reckon it can stand one more.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*walking towards her room*). Oh, Mr. Ware, will you mend that leak in my room? The water is just pouring on my bed.

GEORGE. Sure. (*He picks up his rain-coat.*) I reckon I'll need this rain-coat for that job.

(*Slowly CAROL comes to the fire while GEORGE watches her with a smile. GEORGE pulls some letters and papers out of his pockets.*)

GEORGE. By the way, anybody looking for mail? I went round to the post-office before I came out.

JUNE (*jumping up*). Oh, goody! I'm so hungry for a letter, I could eat one.

GEORGE (*handing the mail to JUNE*). Miss June, you pass the letters around, while I fix that leak. (*He goes outside.*)

(*CAROL takes off her sweater coat. JUNE hands a letter to CAROL, several letters to PHILIP and then gives MRS. CULPEPPER her mail.*)

JUNE. Aunt Sophronia, perhaps you would like news of your clubs.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*cagerly*). Ah, yes. I have been out of the world so long. (*Glancing at the contents*

of letters.) I have missed Prof. Williamson's lecture on the Symbolism of Color and Miss Doolittle's interpretation of Bergson. (*Sighs.*) I shall be sadly behind the times when I return to town. How fast the world moves in our day! If we falter for a moment in the pursuit of culture we lose our stride in the marching hosts of light. (*Sound of hammering.*) Listen! Mr. Ware is at work on the roof. He came just in time. (*She goes into her room.*)

(JUNE hands MURRAY a magazine and he walks over to the fireplace.)

JUNE (*looking at PHILIP who is tearing open envelopes and throwing down contents*). Don't you like your letters, Phil?

PHIL. Bill — another bill — more bills. What luck! They find me even here. What did you get, June? (PHILIP walks over to L. where JUNE is looking at her mail with a rueful smile.)

JUNE. Some circulars from the School of Domestic Science.—“What to Eat and How to Cook It.” “How to Cook a Husband.” (PHILIP whistles.) No — “How to Cook for a Husband.”

PHILIP. Very useful information for a young lady.

JUNE. The girl ought to have the husband first.

PHILIP. To try new recipes on?

JUNE. Philip Russell, you're the worst tease —

PHILIP (*interrupting*). In Tennessee.

JUNE. In the whole world.

GEORGE comes in from outdoors with a hammer in his hand.

GEORGE (*coming down to C.*). That job's done. No more rain on Mrs. Culpepper's bed. Have you seen Bill Jakin lately?

CAROL. He and Mrs. Jakin were here this afternoon. They left just before the storm broke.

JUNE (*shows PHIL's sketch of LIZ to GEORGE*). Phil made this sketch of Mrs. Jakin. Isn't it good?

GEORGE (*smiling as he looks at it*). Yes — that's Liz all right. At fifteen she was the Belle of the Mountain. That was quite a spell ago.

MURRAY. Crude people — these backwoodsmen.

GEORGE. In the mountains we don't judge a man by the clothes he wears or the way he talks. Bill's poor, but a mon's a mon for a' that.

MURRAY. The mountaineers seem very ignorant to me.

GEORGE (*with proud independence*). They haven't any book learning, but the men and women of these mountains are pure-blooded Americans. They're ragged, but they're not beholden to any one. They ask no favors and they never take orders from any man, save as patriots in time of war. They always answer their country's call. They fought in the civil war and they were heroes in the world war.

CAROL (*shuddering*). But don't you think these mountain feuds are terrible?

GEORGE. It's as hard to stop them as it is a mountain torrent rushing down to the rocks below.

MURRAY (*with significant emphasis*). Bill Jakin has your rifle and he is after Big Pete.

GEORGE (*startled out of his calmness*). Big Pete? What is he doing around here?

JUNE. Bill says he's come back to get even.

GEORGE. It was the year I left the mountain that Bill and Pete had their big fight for Liz. I thought that trouble was ended when Big Pete went to Kentucky, but we mountain folks always come back.

JUNE. Oh, dear. This is such a dangerous place. Come, Phil, let's get some supper.

PHILIP. Yes, I'm hungry enough to eat — biscuits. *(JUNE and PHILIP go into the kitchen.)*

GEORGE *(goes to outside door, opens it and looks out)*. The rain's over. Our mountain storms are fierce while they last, but sometimes they stop as suddenly as they break. *(He looks at CAROL and MURRAY by the fireplace.)* Alden, I reckon you would find inspiration for your poetry in the woods just now.

MURRAY *(going towards the door)*. I'll go for a walk. *(With a significant glance at CAROL.)* I have some arrangements to make with one of the neighbors. The woods will be beautiful after the rain. I'll look for laurel. *(MURRAY with the magazine in his hand, goes outside, leaving GEORGE and CAROL alone. CAROL stands, pensive, by the fireplace. GEORGE comes down to C. and looks at her with tenderness.)*

GEORGE. I'm afraid that you have had an uncomfortable time here, but it's all right now, isn't it, little girl? *(He holds out his arms for her to come to him. She looks up at him and then turns away. He drops his arms in disappointment.)*

CAROL. Of course, there have been some inconveniences, but we have tried to rise above them and keep our minds on higher things. Living with nature is different from what we had imagined.

GEORGE. I know it's been a rough life for a dainty little woman like you, and all through these two weeks I have been thinking of you, thinking of you, and wishing I could be here to make things more comfortable for you.

CAROL (*with reproach*). And yet you stayed away.

GEORGE. So that you could have your fill of poetry and romance. (*Looking at her with a tender smile.*) But it's good to see you again, little girl. (*CAROL looks into the fireplace without speaking. Slowly the smile fades from GEORGE's face at her unresponsiveness.*) You have had a good time, haven't you?

CAROL. Yes, while you have been wrapped up in your business affairs, I have found the romance I've longed for.

GEORGE (*giving her a penetrating look*). Is it that poet chap?

CAROL. He says I'm his inspiration — that he could write poetry all day with me near him.

GEORGE (*drily*). No doubt. I'm not worrying about him. But where do you come in?

CAROL (*rapturously clasping her hands*). It will be a wonderful thing to be the inspiration of a poet — to know that my love feeds the sacred fire of his genius.

GEORGE. Will that keep you warm and comfortable?

CAROL (*impatiently*). You are so matter-of-fact.

GEORGE (*looking at the fireplace*). I was just a-thinking that there are times when a real fire on the hearth is mighty cozy.

CAROL. You don't understand me.

GEORGE. Mebbe not. I'm a plain man, but I've loved you a long time.

CAROL (*twistfully*). I want poetry — romance.

GEORGE. I can't talk poetry, but I want to take care of you, little girl, and I want to make you happy. You see, Carol, I've had a hard fight and I've had to make my way alone — and so, to keep up my pluck and cheer me on, I've held before me a picture of a home — a real home — with a little woman to smile when I came back from work. And always the woman in that picture was — you. (*With passionate feeling.*) Ever since I've known you, I've wanted you and for years I've worked to make a home for you. (*CAROL is touched by GEORGE's speech, but resists his appeal.*)

CAROL (*with reproach*). You say you love me and yet you brought me to this wilderness and left me.

GEORGE. Yes — because — because — I thought that here in my mountain home, face to face with the elemental necessities of life, you might see what things are of real worth.

CAROL (*throwing up her head*). I can rise above material things and live in the ideal.

GEORGE. You think you can, Carol, but in the struggle for food,— warmth — love — we are just plain men and women — just male and female. My dad married my mammy when she was sixteen. They were mighty poor and they didn't talk much about loving, but he was her man to the end and there never was any other woman in the world for him. (*With a masterful air.*) Carol, I won't give you up. You're mine — mine. (*He grasps CAROL in his arms. She breaks away from him.*)

CAROL. No — no — I'm not a Liz Jakin to be won by force. You're rough and crude — you're a cave-man.

GEORGE. Mebbe I am, but I'm a man — man enough to fight when fighting's needed.

CAROL. Yes, you encourage the mountaineers in their fighting. I saw you give Bill Jakin your rifle to carry on his feud with Big Pete.

GEORGE (*aroused to anger*). So that's what you think of me, is it?

JUNE and PHILIP burst in from the kitchen. JUNE carries a table cloth and a large piece of card board, and PHILIP has a tray of dishes. They begin to set the table.

JUNE. Supper will be ready in ten minutes.

PHILIP. If the cooks don't burn it up.

JUNE. The head cook is very efficient, but her assistant is — irresponsible. (*Looking around.*) Where's Murray?

CAROL. He went for a walk in the woods.

JUNE. He'll be back soon. Even Murray Alden always remembers meal time. (*Taking up the card board.*) I'm going to tack up this sign. Where shall we put it?

PHILIP. This is a good place — near the supper table.

JUNE. Where's a hammer?

GEORGE (*handing a hammer to PHIL.*). Here's the hammer that mended the leak. (*JUNE and PHILIP tack up the sign.*)

JUNE. Now we'll watch Murray's expression when

he reads it. But — to work — to work. Men must be fed no matter what the state of their affections. (*With a glance at GEORGE. CAROL, pensive, remains by the fireplace. GEORGE places chairs at the table and lights the candles.*)

GEORGE (*as he lights the candles*). I reckon that over at Bill's little log cabin they're having supper, too — cornbread and hog meat. I wonder where Big Pete is. Bill has a heavy score against him. It well nigh ruined Bill and Liz when Pete burned their barn and live stock — and a mountaineer never forgets a wrong.

CAROL *looks troubled. MURRAY strolls in from outdoors. He is reading his magazine.*

JUNE. Murray, I knew you would come back when supper was *ready*.

MURRAY (*starting as from a reverie*). Where am I? Oh, yes, I was just reading a beautiful article. Such felicity of phrase — such vividness of impression! That man is an artist in words.

JUNE. Murray Alden, will you please put down that magazine and get us some water.

MURRAY (*pained*). Presently — presently. First let me read you a few paragraphs from this remarkable article on the "Joy of Work." (*GEORGE looks at MURRAY with disdain and then goes and throws a log of wood on the fire.*)

JUNE. Never mind *reading* about work. It's time for supper and we have a new rule in this dining-room. (*Pointing to the sign.*) Read the sign over there. (*They watch MURRAY as he goes over and reads the sign.*)

MURRAY (*reading the sign in a bewildered way*).
“He who will not work shall not eat.”

CAROL (*at table R. in pained surprise*). June, how could you?

JUNE. I thought that an old-fashioned motto was needed in this boarding-house.

MURRAY. Very commonplace and crude.

(*PHILIP goes to door up R. and calls.*) Supper, Mrs. Culpepper — first call to supper.

MRS. CULPEPPER *comes in.*

MRS. CULPEPPER. My poor mortal body is in need of refreshment. (*She seats herself at the table and JUNE and PHILIP also take their places at the table. MURRAY hands CAROL a spray of mountain laurel.*)

MURRAY. Carol, I brought you this mountain laurel,—symbol of springtime and love. (*GEORGE watches MURRAY and CAROL with keen eyes.*)

CAROL (*taking the laurel*). How beautiful! The woods must be lovely after the storm.

MURRAY. They are an inspiration. (*CAROL toys with the laurel. GEORGE goes to the window and looks out.*)

GEORGE. The clouds have cleared. There will be a bright moon to-night. I reckon Bill Jakin will go squirrel-hunting. Mebbe he'll come round this way.

(*CAROL, after a moment's hesitation, puts the laurel in her hair. MURRAY and GEORGE are both watching her. MURRAY smiles. GEORGE's face saddens and he clinches his hands.*)

POSITIONS.

CAROL. MURRAY. GEORGE. MRS. C. JUNE. PHILIP.

CURTAIN.

A CABIN COURTSHIP.

THE THIRD ACT.

SCENE: *The same as Act I. Eight o'clock in the evening.*

One old-fashioned lamp and several candles light the room. The window looking on to the porch is open and the moonlight streams in. The supper dishes have been cleared away and a large jar of mountain laurel stands on the table.

A man and a girl are sitting on the porch with their backs to the window. The girl wears a pretty, fluffy dress and has a scarf of tulle over her head and shoulders. The man is playing the guitar and the girl is singing a love song. She sings two or three verses.

The door up R. is opened and CAROL comes in stealthily. She wears a hat and a travelling coat and carries a suit-case. She looks around, sees the man and girl on the porch, goes to the kitchen door and opens it. There is the sound of some one chopping wood. She starts back and then quietly closes the door. She looks at the couple on the porch and then at the outside door. She stands thinking for a minute. Then she hides her suit-case and takes off her hat and long coat, revealing a becoming summer dress.

The singing and playing stop, the man puts his arm around the girl and slowly her head sinks on his shoulder. CAROL watches them. She coughs to attract their attention. They are too absorbed to notice. She

drops a book on the floor. They start and jump up.

CAROL. June, aren't you afraid you will take cold in the night air?

JUNE. Oh, no. I have this scarf.

CAROL. That flimsy bit of tulle won't keep you warm. You had better come in and get a wrap.

JUNE (*dreamily*). The moonlight is so beautiful.

CAROL. Come in. I want to show you something.

CAROL *nervously moves around, while PHILIP and JUNE enter from outdoors.*

PHILIP. What luck! It was too good to last.

JUNE (*impatiently*). What did you want to show us, Carol?

CAROL (*in confusion*). Oh — yes — show you? (*Going to the table with the laurel.*) I wanted you to see how beautiful this mountain laurel looks.

PHILIP (*in disgust*). Is that what you called us in for?

CAROL. I thought you would like to paint it.

PHILIP. No; there was a prettier scene out there — the soft outlines of the distant mountains — the fire-flies flitting by — the trees swaying in the wind — moonlight over all —

CAROL. And June.

PHILIP. Yes, the time, the place and the girl.

JUNE (*looking at CAROL with questioning eyes*). Carol, you seem very fond of laurel. I saw you put some in your hair at supper.

CAROL. I love it. It means so much to me. It's a symbol of springtime and — love.

JUNE. That's just what Murray said.

PHILIP. Come, June, let's go back to the porch and finish our song. (*JUNE leads the way to the door.*)

CAROL. Oh, no, Philip. Mr. Ware is chopping wood in the kitchen and I think you ought to help him.

PHILIP. Hang it all! What's your game, Carol? Do you want to sit on the porch yourself?

CAROL. Oh, no.

JUNE. A girl wouldn't want to sit there *alone*.

PHILIP. No, she needs protection against the mosquitoes.

CAROL (*with a significant smile*). And the night air.

PHILIP. Then why are you sending me into the kitchen?

CAROL. To help George. He's been busy doing things to make us comfortable ever since he came.

JUNE. I didn't think you had noticed what *he* was doing. You seemed too much absorbed in some one else.

CAROL. I have never failed to see that Mr. Ware is very — practical.

JUNE. But not poetical.

PHILIP (*as he strums his guitar*). Oh, girls. When I was sketching near one of the cabins yesterday I heard a young mountaineer singing a funny song.

JUNE (*enthusiastically*). Sing it for us. (*CAROL impatiently walks to the window and looks out.*)

PHILIP (*playing guitar*). It went something like this:

MUSIC. (*See pages 87-88.*)

Call up your dog, oh, call up your dog!

Call up your dog!
Call up your dog!
Let's a-go huntin', to ketch a ground hog.
Rang tang a-whaddle linky day."

(JUNE *beats time with her foot and claps her hands.*)

JUNE. That's a real mountain song.

(PHILIP *cuts a pigeon-wing, twirls around with his guitar and sings in a quaint minor. Then he suddenly changes his key to this:*)

Did you *ever* see the devil,
With his *pitchfork* and ladle,
And his *old* iron shovel,
And his *old* gourd head?
O! I *will* go to meetin'
And I *will* go to meetin',
Yes, I *will* go to meetin'
In an *old* tin pan.

(JUNE *laughs and claps her hands.*)

JUNE. Aren't the mountaineers funny? I've never seen anybody like Liz and Bill Jakin.

PHILIP. I hope Bill doesn't come around here with that rifle. He might shoot me for a squirrel.

CAROL (*impatiently*). Can't you hear Mr. Ware chopping wood in the kitchen while you are singing nonsensical songs here?

PHILIP (*putting down his guitar*). What a pity my art is not appreciated. (*Going towards the door L.*) I don't want to be a shirker. I'll go and help Ware keep the home fires burning. (*He goes into the kitchen.*)

JUNE (*looking at CAROL reproachfully*). Now, Carol, do you think it was fair to interrupt an — episode like that? I ask you as one girl to another.

CAROL. I was afraid that you would take cold in that thin dress.

JUNE. You know from experience, Carol Pratt, that there are times when a girl is willing to take the risk. Why do you think I was wearing this dress in the moonlight? (*Sighs.*) Now it may be a long time before Phil's in that mood again. He even forgot that I'm not a good cook.

CAROL (*twistfully*). Oh, June, did you ever wish that you could look into the future?

JUNE. Indeed, I have. I've tried card reading, palmistry, crystal gazing, clairvoyance and the ouija board to find out when I was going to be married and not once have I been told that I was going to be an old maid. That's very encouraging.

CAROL. From what I have seen since we came to the cabin, I think there's no danger of you being an old maid.

JUNE. But you know, Carol, a man can come very near to the point of proposing and then shy off. He'll come right up to the edge without taking the leap.

CAROL. That's the time he needs — encouragement. Let me see your hands. (*She takes JUNE's hands and looks at the palms.*) You have a good heart line. You are going to be married when you are about twenty.

JUNE. I'll have to hurry. I'm twenty now.

CAROL. You'll be very happy.

JUNE. Will I learn to cook?

CAROL (*laughing*). A certain young man will think you are the best little cook in the world.

JUNE. I've heard that love is blind, but I didn't know that love made men lose their sense of taste. This house party has been a great experience, hasn't it?

CAROL (*with a far-away expression*). I never shall forget these weeks we have spent in the mountain cabin.

JUNE. We've come to know each other so well.

CAROL. And yet I don't know my own self.

JUNE. Life isn't simple when a girl has two men on the string. I know which one *I* would take, and it isn't the one I was betting on when we came to this wilderness.

CAROL. I know what you mean, June, but I want a man who is something more than practical.

JUNE. And more than unselfish?

CAROL. Ye — es.

JUNE. Do you want the moon?

CAROL. No, but I want a man I can look up to.

JUNE. Then perhaps, you'll find him in the moon.
(*The clock strikes eight. CAROL starts.*)

CAROL. One — two — three — four — five — six — seven — eight o'clock.

JUNE. How time flies!

CAROL (*greatly disturbed*). June, won't you go into the kitchen and see if the men need anything?

JUNE (*looking at CAROL with suspicion*). Why should they need anything just at eight o'clock? What is the matter with you to-night?

CAROL (*assuming indifference*). Nothing.

JUNE. You're acting very queerly.

CAROL. I'm a little nervous. That's all. I think it's something about this place.

JUNE (*sitting down*). Then I ought not to leave you alone.

CAROL. Oh, please do. That's just what I want.

JUNE. Indeed? You're a sociable soul, Carol Pratt.

CAROL. I mean — I mean — Don't you see, June?

JUNE (*jumping up with a laugh*). I think I do. Good luck, Carol. (JUNE goes into the kitchen.)

CAROL closes the door. She hastily puts on her hat and travelling coat, picks up her suit-case and goes to the outside door. Just as she is going out, LIZ JAKIN, greatly troubled, comes in, carrying a pail of milk.

LIZ. I fotched you-uns some fraish milk.

CAROL. Thank you, Mrs. Jakin. Please take it out to the kitchen.

LIZ. Whar be Mr. Ware? I want ter see 'im. (*With agitation*.) Thar's trouble a-komin' and he air a powerful holp in trouble.

CAROL (*pointing to the kitchen door*). You'll find him right out there. (LIZ starts towards the kitchen and stops.)

LIZ. Thar's a bright moon ter-night. When I kem by that thar big sycamore, I seed a team and that brigarty young man a-standin' by.

CAROL. What do you mean by "brigarty"?

LIZ. Good la! Whar was you fotched up? That's common. When I say that young furriner is brigarty among women-folks, hit means that he's stuck on hisself and wants to show off. I 'low that young feller

war a-waitin' fer somebody. I don't confidence 'im much. (CAROL is restless and disturbed during LIZ's speech.)

CAROL. You'll find Mr. Ware in the kitchen.

LIZ. I want ter tell 'im something. (LIZ goes toward the kitchen.)

CAROL picks up her suit-case. GEORGE, who has heard voices, comes quickly from the kitchen.

GEORGE (cordially). Howdy, Liz. I'm glad to see you. (He shakes hands with her.)

LIZ. Hit's mighty good ter hev ye back. I fotched you-uns some fraish milk.

GEORGE. Thank you, good neighbor. (He sees CAROL trying to slip out unobserved.) Carol, you are not going out to-night, are you?

CAROL. Yes, I'm going out.

GEORGE (turning to LIZ). Liz, if you will take the milk right out into the kitchen I'll talk with you later.

LIZ. I reckon I will. (She goes into the kitchen.)

GEORGE (turns to CAROL and speaks in quiet, firm tones). It's not safe for you to go out alone.

CAROL. I have an appointment and I'm going to keep it.

GEORGE (quietly). You are not going away with Murray Alden to-night. (CAROL is surprised by GEORGE's knowledge of her plans and looks at him with a startled air and drops her suit-case.)

CAROL. I didn't say I was going with Murray.

GEORGE. I'm not blind. I knew at supper time that you had some plan on foot.

CAROL (defiantly). Yes, I am going away with Murray Alden.

GEORGE. You don't realize what you are doing. You are hypnotized by his romantic talk.

CAROL. I know what I am doing and I'm going of my own free will.

GEORGE (*with great earnestness*). How much do you know of the world and what lies before you? All your life you have been sheltered — all your life you have been surrounded with comfort and ease and now you are trusting your future to this man who has never done a stroke of real work and who can't take care of you.

CAROL. He's a poet — a gifted man and I am going to help him.

GEORGE. Yes — wait on him — slave for him.

CAROL (*indignantly*). You have no right to talk to me that way.

GEORGE. I'd rather fight Murray Alden face to face, but this thing can't be settled that way — by the code of the mountain.

CAROL (*shudders*). The code of the mountain — no — no.

GEORGE. But I care too much for your happiness to let you go into this blindly. I can see you with him, when your beautiful romance has flown out of the window and you are worn out with work and care, trying to carry the burden for two. Carol, stop and think.

CAROL. Love is the great thing.

GEORGE. Yes, love is the great thing, but not infatuation. How are you going to meet the problems of every day life? Hasn't your experience here taught you that he can't even keep you comfortable?

CAROL. A man like Murray Alden shouldn't be ex-

pected to build fires and chop wood and mend leaks.

GEORGE. Mebbe not. But somebody has to do it. Carol, I'm not pleading for myself. That is all over. (*Proudly.*) I don't want a woman without her love. I will never trouble you again. But I can't see you walking blindfolded towards a precipice and not put out my hand to stop you.

CAROL. I have promised to go with him.

GEORGE. You can wait until morning.

CAROL (*picks up her suit-case and starts towards the door.*) No, I must go now.

GEORGE (*takes the suit-case from her with a masterful air.*) You will stay here tonight and tomorrow you can decide.

CAROL (*indignantly*). What right have you to dictate to me?

GEORGE (*quietly*). Only the right of a man who wishes to protect and shield you. (*CAROL comes slowly back to center of the room. She turns and goes towards door up R. She droops like a delicate flower. She is worn out with the struggle. At the door she turns and looks at GEORGE who stands in the center of the room, absorbed in thought and still holding the suit-case. The mountain laurel that she was wearing over her heart falls to the floor, but she does not notice it. She goes into her room; GEORGE stands perfectly still.*)

LIZ JAKIN *comes in from the kitchen.*

LIZ. Mr. Ware, I want ter tell ye something.

GEORGE (*drops the suit-case with a bang and suddenly comes to himself*). Yes, Liz, what is it?

LIZ. I'm afeared we-uns air goin' ter hev a heap o' trouble. Big Pete's kom back from Kaintucky and Bill's arter him wi' a gun.

GEORGE. We must stop this fighting.

LIZ. Nuthin' kin stop Bill.

GEORGE. Are you sure Pete's in the mountain?

LIZ. I knows it fer true, Mr. Ware. We-uns war in the cabin. I giv the children their hog-meat and co'n bread fer supper, Bill war a-smokin' his pipe an' a-cleanin' his gun an' I war a-totin' in the milk. All of a suddenty I heerd a noise in the bresh. Then I seed a man sneakin' up ter the cabin. Bill seed him from the door. "Hit's Pete," he sez, an' goes arter 'im with his gun.

GEORGE. Which way did they go?

LIZ (*greatly excited*). This a-way. Oh, Mr. Ware, this shootin's a sin an' a shame — a burnin' shame. Bill's my man an' I hev laid off ter stand by 'im through thick an' thin, but hit's wuss'n stealin' money ter take a feller-critter's life.

GEORGE. I thought this shooting had been stopped in the mountain.

LIZ. Mounting folks air mounting folks an' we-uns air powerful sot in our ways. But ef Bill kills Pete I'm afeared they'll hev the law on 'im an' take 'im ter the pen'tiary an' ef Pete shoots fust — (*With despair.*) Whut'll I do without Bill?

GEORGE (*with grim determination*). We must stop them.

LIZ. Bill sets a great store by ye, Mr. Ware, an' ye kin stop 'im ef anybody kin. Bill air peaceable nough ef he ain't jawed at, an' air lef be, but he air

mighty rough when he air riled. (*Wildly pointing at open door up L.*) Look thar!

BILL *peers into the door. He is carrying GEORGE'S rifle and looking intently for some one.*

BILL. Hev you-uns seed that cussed critter?

GEORGE (*in a commanding tone*). No. Come in and put up that gun.

BILL (*coming in*). That dad-burned scoundrel Pete's kom a-sneakin' over hyar: waiting in the lorrel arter dark fer me, but I'll git 'im.

LIZ (*going up to BILL and speaking in imploring tones*). Bill, don't kill Big Pete or thar'll be a heap o' trouble.

BILL (*fiercely*). Didn't he burn down my barn an' pore live critters?

LIZ. Yes, Bill, but that war quite a spell ago, afore he war druv out o' the mounting.

BILL. Whut brung him back ter these hyar mountings?

LIZ. He orter stayed in Kaintucky.

BILL. He won't get shet o' me this time.

GEORGE (*putting his hand on BILL'S shoulder*). Come, Bill, don't shoot a man down in cold blood.

BILL (*fiercely shaking off GEORGE'S hand*). He ortern't ter be let live.

GEORGE (*quietly but firmly*). And you oughtn't to commit murder.

BILL (*angrily*). What do ye saft-hearted city folks know a' mounting ways? We-uns git jestice.

CAROL *comes in from up R. without her coat and hat. She listens, awe-struck, in the background.*

GEORGE (*dropping into the vernacular of his boyhood*). I reckon I do know mounting ways. Warn't I born hyar? Air ye forgittin' how I holped ye with the log-raising and the corn-cutting in the autumn? Air ye forgittin' that we-uns went coon-hunting ter-gether on moonlight nights like this? (*BILL is softened a little, but resists GEORGE's appeal.*)

BILL (*sullenly*). Ye lef' the mounting when ye war a boy an' ye air differ from we-uns — ye air like the furriners.

GEORGE. No, I belongs hyar. When I lef' the mounting, I did hone fer my dog Fiddler, an' the times we'd had a-hunting, an' the trout-fishin' an' the smell of the woods an' nobody bossin' at all. I'm a hill-billy, all right.

LIZ. Yes. Bill, he air mounting folks.

GEORGE. You-uns air my folks — the only folks I hev. The saft-handed city folks with their fine ways and prutty words don't understand me. I'm like ye an' Liz.

(*CAROL starts forward, but restrains herself.*)

LIZ. Bill, listen ter him.

GEORGE. I reckon I know how ye feel, Bill. When I see things a-goin' wrong, I kin see blood. Then I cud take a gun and shoot the man that's a-doin' wrong.

(*CAROL shudders.*)

BILL. That's a man's way.

GEORGE. No, that air a fool's way. Ef ye kill Big Pete, ye'll bring a heap o'trouble on yerself an' Liz an' the children.

BILL. I hev sed I war a-goin' ter wipe 'im out, ef he com sneakin' back hyar, an' I ain't a-goin' ter fail o'

my word. Things air a-goin' ter be settled one way or t'other ternight.

LIZ. He air got a pistol, Bill, an' he'll kill ye.

BILL. I 'low as how I ain't afeared o' him, not ef he air Satan hisself. (*He starts at a sound outside.*) I heerd something. Hyar I stand a-jawing wi' ye an' time's a-wasting. (*He goes out into the night.*)

LIZ. I hev done seed a powerful lot o' trouble, fust one way an' another.

GEORGE. But it hasn't broken your spirit.

LIZ. Nuthin' kin, but I don' know whut things air komin' ter. I wisht I'd niver set eyes on Pete. He allus war a no-count critter an' when he tuk ter a-follerin' me round afore I war married, I tole him ter quit. Now, he's a-laying off ter git Bill jes ter spite me.

GEORGE. Men fight for land and fight for gold, but their fiercest fights are for women.

Suddenly MURRAY, looking bewildered, appears at the window.

CAROL (*starting back*). Murray!

GEORGE (*calmly*). Come in, Alden. We've missed you this evening.

MURRAY (*as he comes in*). I just walked down to the bend in the road.

LIZ. Hev ye seed Big Pete?

MURRAY (*startled*). Big Pete?

LIZ. Yes. Big Pete's a-hidin' in the bresh, a-waiting ter kill Bill.

MURRAY. How distressing! I hope there won't be any shooting around here.

LIZ. 'Thar's trouble a-komin'.

GEORGE (*looking at MURRAY with keen eyes*). Yes, there's trouble ahead.

A huge skulking figure appears at the outside door. BIG PETE wears a slouched hat and a coarse suit with the trousers tucked into cow-hide boots. He has a dark, crafty face and shifting eyes. His pistol is cocked. He rushes into the room, followed by BILL. They face each other.

POSITIONS.

CAROL.

MURRAY.

GEORGE.

PETE.

BILL

LIZ.

BILL. I tole ye that ye warn't ter kom hyar. Ye're got ter go back ter Kaintucky or ye'll nuver git thar no more.

PETE. I hev been a-waitin' fer ye an' I hev kom hyar ter git ye.

BILL. Foolin' with me air like makin' faces at a rattlesnake; hit may be satisfyin' ter the feelin's but 'tain't safe.

CAROL *shrinks back and MURRAY disappears. JUNE and PHILIP rush in from the kitchen and MRS. CULPEPPER comes in from her room up R. JUNE covers her eyes with her hands. MRS. CULPEPPER gives a cry of dismay.*

PETE. I hev kom hyar ter tell ye a word — a word ez I hev been a-aimin' an' a-contrivin' ter tell ye ever sence ye war married ter Liz over yander.

LIZ. I hed a right ter make a ch'ice. I tuk the man I wanted.

PETE. Jes' so. Ye tuk Bill an' ye treated me scandalous an' now I kom back ter git even. I hev been a-layin' off ter git Bill fer a long time — ter spite ye.

BILL. An' ye burned my barn an' pore live critters fer spite. Now, cl'ar out, ye cussed scoundrel.

PETE. Naw.

POSITIONS.

MRS. C.

JUNE

CAROL.

LIZ.

GEORGE.

PHILIP.

PETE.

BILL.

(BILL raises his gun to his shoulder, as PETE, with his pistol cocked, advances a step nearer. Instantly GEORGE steps between the angry men. He strikes PETE's pistol downward with a quick strong hand. There is a flash, a report and the pistol falls from PETE's hand. PETE turns, terrified, and catches the hand that struck his pistol to the floor. As PETE turns upon GEORGE he sees that GEORGE's other hand is over the muzzle of BILL's gun.)

BILL. Tuk yer hand off, or by the Lord Almighty, I'll shoot it off.

GEORGE. Let go that gun or I'll break your head.

GEORGE holds PETE's powerful right arm in a vice-like grip and keeps his other hand over the muzzle of BILL's gun. CAROL starts to go towards GEORGE and holds her hand over her heart.)

CAROL. George — George.

GEORGE (*in anxiety for her*). Get out of the way, Carol.

(*Finally BILL lets go his gun and stands empty handed beside GEORGE, who holds the rifle.*)

GEORGE (*to PETE*). Now you go.

BIG PETE. See hyar, whut business ye got meddlin'?

GEORGE (*in his calm, deliberate way*). I hev a-plenty. Now ye cl'ar out.

PETE (*defiant*). I 'low I ain't goin'.

GEORGE (*looking PETE in the eyes*). Waal, ye 'lowed wrong. Ye go.

PETE (*cowed by GEORGE's firmness*). Waal, jes ter pleasure ye, I'll go. (*At the door he turns and says to GEORGE.*) Ye ought ter be in my gang, that's whar ye ought ter be. Ye've got a damned deal too much grit fer city-folks. (*PETE goes outdoors and they all give a sigh of relief.*)

LIZ (*with deep emotion*). Oh, Mr. Ware, ye saved we-uns a heap o' trouble.

BILL. Ef ye hedn't hung on ter my gun like ye done, Pete would hev been dead.

GEORGE. And you would have been hunted down for a murderer.

BILL. I'm glad ye done hit, George. Hit ain't sech a killin' matter nohow. Come along, Liz. Time's a-wasting.

GEORGE (*handing his rifle to BILL*). You can have the rifle, Bill, if you promise not to shoot Big Pete.

BILL. I promise fer gospel. (*Looking at the gun with affection.*) Hit's a mighty good rifle-gun.

GEORGE. For *squirrel-hunting*. Remember that, Bill.

BILL. I 'low I'll nuver forgit whut ye done ter-night.

GEORGE. There must be peace in the mountains. (*Holding out his hand to LIZ.*) Good-bye, Liz. We are going back to the city tomorrow.

LIZ. I wisht ye war a-goin' to stay hyar.

GEORGE. I love the mountains, but my work is in the city. Perhaps the others would like to stay here longer. (*Looking around until his eye lights on Mrs. CULPEPPER with a smile.*) Mrs. Culpepper, would you like to spend another week in the cabin?

MRS. CULPEPPER (*greatly disturbed*). This simple life may be elevating; but it has its drawbacks and inconveniences and I feel that it is my duty to go back to my theosophy lectures, my travel club and my drama class.

LIZ (*shaking her head*). I cud nuver git tuk up with them town ways. (*With dignity.*) We-uns ain't got no book-larnin' but we kin see the sun riz up out o' the cove and see him go down red over yander behind t'other mounting. We kin walk on the sod and earn our livin' out o' the soil. Pore 'nough livin'. (*Proudly.*) But we ain't beholden to no man.

MURRAY *strolls in from outdoors.*

JUNE. Murray, we've had the biggest excitement of our lives and you missed it.

MURRAY. I couldn't be present at one of these shooting frays.

CAROL (*with deep feeling*). It was terrible. My heart stood still when George stepped between the men.

PHILIP. If Bill's gun had gone off, George would have gone to the Happy Hunting Ground.

GEORGE. Oh, it was nothing. I wanted to keep Bill and Liz out of trouble.

LIZ. An' ye done hit, Mr. Ware. I'll nuver forgit ye ter the day I die.

MRS. CULPEPPER (*with a sigh*). I thought we would find rest and quiet here near to nature's heart, but the most unexpected, startling things have happened all the time.

JUNE. Yes, it's been thrilling.

MRS. CULPEPPER. I do hope that there is an early train for the city tomorrow. I'm going to pack my suit-case. (*She goes into her room.*)

JUNE. This has been a great lark, but I'm off for town to take a course in cooking.

PHILIP. I think I had better go too, to see that she doesn't waste her skill on some other man.

BILL. I'll help you-uns wi' yer things in the mornin' so ye kin git a soon start.

JUNE. Thank you, I guess you think "we-uns air mighty helpless."

BILL. Waal, I reckon ye furriners air right smart in some ways, but — (*Looking at MURRAY.*) I 'low thar's *one* o' ye ain't got much grit.

JUNE (*laughing*). Poor Murray! This is a dangerous place for you.

PHILIP. Come, June, let's look at the moon once more.

CAROL (*handing PHILIP a wrap for JUNE*). June may need a wrap this time. (*PHILIP takes the wrap and puts it around JUNE's shoulders.*)

JUNE. We'll say a last goodbye to the woods.

PHILIP. And there'll be nobody looking on but the man in the moon. (*JUNE and PHILIP go outdoors.*)

GEORGE (*calling after them*). Remember we leave *early* in the morning.

LIZ. Pears like this mounting air a mighty good place fer courtin'. Come a-long, Bill. (*LIZ and BILL go towards the outside door.*)

BILL. I'll be back by in the mornin'.

LIZ. I wish ye well.

GEORGE (*looks from CAROL to MURRAY and then turns to BILL and LIZ who are at the door.*) I'll go a piece with you. (*LIZ, BILL and GEORGE go out up L. leaving CAROL and MURRAY alone.*)

MURRAY. Carol, I waited for you a long time down at the turn in the road.

CAROL (*coldly*). I couldn't come.

MURRAY (*handing her a paper*). This is a poem I wrote while I was waiting for you. (*CAROL takes the poem without a sign of interest.*)

CAROL. Another poem!

MURRAY. The team is still there. Let's slip away together now.

CAROL. I'm not going with you.

MURRAY. Not going?

CAROL. No.

MURRAY. Perhaps it will be best to wait until tomorrow.

CAROL. I'm not going with you tomorrow, nor the day after tomorrow, nor any day.

MURRAY. But, Carol, I cannot live without you, my inspiration.

CAROL (*bitterly*). An inspiration for your poems — that is all I am to you. I want to be a flesh and blood woman to a real man.

MURRAY. Carol, what has changed you so?

CAROL. Life in the mountain cabin, face to face with realities.

MURRAY. Then you will not go out into the world with me?

CAROL. No, I know you too well now.

MURRAY (*with a light sigh*). Our love has been a beautiful dream, but dreams are fleeting. The storm — the moonlight — this scene — all this has given me an inspiration for a poem. — I must find my note-book. (*He goes out L.*)

(CAROL stands still for a moment looking as if the world had crumbled at her feet. Then she glances down at the poem which she still holds in her hand. She goes to the fireplace and throws it in. She kneels down and watches it burn.)

GEORGE comes in from outdoors quietly and stands watching her. Conscious that there is some one in the room, CAROL looks up and sees GEORGE. She tries to hide her tears.

GEORGE. I know that you are very tired from all the strain and excitement and so I will say good night.

CAROL (*sadly, as she rises to her feet*). Good night, George.

GEORGE (*holding out his hand*). Since we probably will not see each other alone again, I want to say — goodbye.

CAROL (*starting*). Not goodbye?

GEORGE. Yes.

CAROL. But we will see each other when we go back to the city, won't we?

GEORGE. I think not.

CAROL. But can't we still be — friends?

GEORGE. I shall always be your friend, but it's hard for a man to keep on seeing a woman when he has lost her love.

CAROL. It isn't you who have lost — it is I.

GEORGE. But you have found what you wanted — poetry and romance.

CAROL. I have found that fine deeds are better than fine words.

GEORGE. Why — Carol — are you waking up?

CAROL. Yes — at last I'm waking from my sentimental dream. (*Pointing to the ashes in the fireplace.*) That's all that's left — ashes.

GEORGE. What is it that has turned to ashes?

CAROL. Murray Alden's last poem.

GEORGE (*looks at her in happy surprise.*) Cheer up, Carol. We can sweep away the ashes.

CAROL. I've been trying to lean on a hollow reed and I need the strong pine.

GEORGE. Well, this mountain grows pine.

CAROL (*looking at him with admiration and affection.*) Yes, and strong, brave, true-hearted men.

GEORGE (*holding out his arms.*) Little girl, I've been waiting for you to come home.

CAROL (*with a radiant smile.*) After all, the romance I went a-seeking was (*going to him*) right here.

CURTAIN.

I WILL GO TO MEETIN'

Did you ev - er see the dev - il with his

The first system of the musical score for 'I Will Go to Meetin' features a vocal melody in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by a melodic phrase starting on a half note. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include a piano (*p*) marking above the vocal line and a forte (*f*) marking below the piano accompaniment.

pitch fork and lad - le and his old iron shov - el and his old gourd head O!

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal melody and piano accompaniment follow the same pattern. The lyrics 'pitch fork and lad - le and his old iron shov - el and his old gourd head O!' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes a crescendo hairpin.

I will go to meet - in' and I will go to meet - in' Yes,

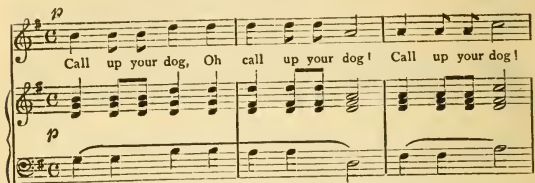
The third system of the musical score. The vocal melody and piano accompaniment continue. The lyrics 'I will go to meet - in' and I will go to meet - in' Yes,' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes a crescendo hairpin.

I will go to meet - in' In an old tin pan.

The fourth and final system of the musical score. The vocal melody and piano accompaniment conclude the piece. The lyrics 'I will go to meet - in' In an old tin pan.' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment includes a crescendo hairpin.

CALL UP YOUR DOG

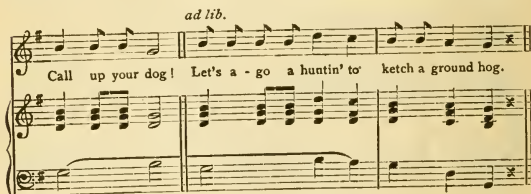
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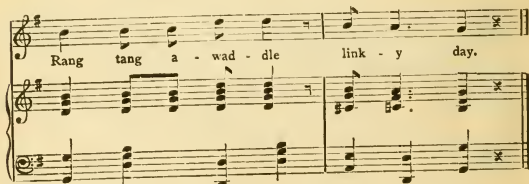
Call up your dog, Oh call up your dog! Call up your dog!

p

ad lib.



Call up your dog! Let's a - go a huntin' to ketch a ground hog.



Rang tang a - wad - dle link - y day.

THE END

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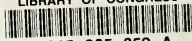
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